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The Adventures of Harry Richmond

By George Meredith


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THE ADVENTURES

OF

HARRY RICHMOND.

BY

GEORGE MEREDITH.

IN THREE VOLS.



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THE ADVENTURES

OF

HARRY RICHMOND.

CHAPTER I.

I BECOME ONE OF THE CHOSEN OF THE NATION.

An entire revulsion in my feelings and my way of thinking was caused by this sudden change of prospect. A member of our Parliament, I could then write to Ottilia, and tell her that I had not wasted time. And it was due to my father, I confessed, when he returned from his ball at dawn, that I should thank him for speaking to Graf Kesensky. "Oh!" said he, "that was our luck, Richie. I have been speaking about you to hundreds for the last six months, and now we owe it to a foreigner!" I thanked him again. He looked eminently handsome in his Henry III. costume, and was disposed to be as luxurious as his original. He

had brought Count Lika, Secretary of Legation to the Austrian Embassy, dressed as an Albanian, with him. The two were stretched on couches, and discoursing of my father's reintroduction of the sedan chair to society. My father explained that he had ordered a couple of dozen of these chairs to be built on a pattern of his own. And he added, "By the way, Richie, there will be sedaniers—porters to pay to-day. Poor men should be paid immediately." I agreed with the monarch. Contemplating him, I became insensible to the sting of ridicule which had been shooting through me, agonizing me for the last eight-and-forty hours. Still I thought: can I never escape from the fascination?—let me only get into Parliament! The idea in me was that Parliament lifted me nearer to Ottilia, and would prompt me to resolute action, out of his tangle of glittering cobwebs. I told him of my interview with Beauchamp Hill. "I have never known Kesensky wrong yet," said he; "except in his backing of Falmouth's horses." Count Lika murmured that he hoped his chief would be wrong in something else: he spoke significantly. My father raised his eyebrows. "In his opinion," Lika accepted the invitation to pursue, "Prince Ernest will not let that announcement stand uncontradicted."

My father's eyes dwelt on him. "Are *we* accused of it?"

Lika slipped from the question. "Who is accused of a newspaper's doings? It is but the denial of a statement."

"I dare them to deny it!—and Lika, my dear fellow, light me a cigarette," said my father.

"Then," said Lika, touching the flame delicately, "you take the view that Kesensky is wrong in another thing besides horses."

I believe he struck on the subject casually: there was nothing for him to gain or lose in it; and he had a liking for my father.

After puffing the cigarette twice or thrice my father threw it down, resuming his conversation upon the sedan, the appropriate dresses of certain of the great masquerading ladies, and an incident that appeared to charge Jorian DeWitt with having misconducted himself. The moment Lika had gone upstairs for two or three hours' sleep, he said to me: "Richie, you and I have no time for that. We must have a man at Falmouth's house by eight o'clock. If the scrubbing-maid on all fours—not an inelegant position, I have remarked—declares him dead, we are at Bartlett's (money-lender) by ten: and in Chippenden borough before two post meridian. As I am a tactician, there is mischief! but I will turn it to my uses as I did our poor Jorian to-night;—he smuggled in the Chassediane: I led her out on my arm. Of that by and by. The point is, that from your oath in Parliament you fly to Sarkeld. I implore you now, by your love for me and the princess, not to lose precious minutes. Richie, we will press things so that you shall be in Sarkeld by the end of the month. My son! my dear boy! how

you loved me once!—you do still! then follow my directions. I have a head. Ay, you think it wild? 'Tis true, my mother was a poetess. But I will convince my son as I am convincing the world—tut, tut! To avoid swelling talk, I tell you, Richie, I have my hand on the world's wheel, and now is the time for you to spring from it and gain your altitude. If you fail *my* success is emptiness."

"Will you avoid Edbury and his like, and protect yourself?" was my form of stipulation, spoken to counteract his urgency.

He gave no answer beyond a wave of the hand suitable to his princely one-coloured costume of ruffled lavender silk, and the magnificent leg he turned to front me. My senses even up to that period were so impressionable as to be swayed by a rich dress and a grand manner when circumstances were not too unfavourable. Now they seemed very favourable, for they offered me an upward path to tread. His appearance propitiated me less after he had passed through the hands of his man Tollingby, but I had again surrendered the lead to him. As to the risk of proceedings being taken against him, he laughed scornfully at the suggestion. "They dare not. The more I dare, the less dare they." Again I listened to his curious roundabout reasoning, which dragged humour at its heels like a comical cur, proclaiming itself imposingly, in spite of the mongrel's barking, to be prudence and common sense. Could I deny that I owed him gratitude for the

things I cherished most?—for my acquaintance with Ottilia?—for his services in Germany?—for the prospect of my elevation in England? I could not; and I tried hard to be recklessly grateful. As to money, he reiterated that he could put his hand on it to satisfy the squire on the day of accounts: for the present we must borrow. His argument upon borrowing—which I knew well, and wondered that I did not at the outset disperse with a breath of contempt—gained on me singularly when reviewed under the light of my immediate interests: it ran thus:—We have a rich or a barren future, just as we conceive it. The art of generalship in life consists in gathering your scattered supplies to suit a momentous occasion; and it is the future which is chiefly in debt to us, and adjures us for its sake to fight the fight and conquer. That man is vile and fit to be trampled on, who cannot count his future in gold and victory. If, as we find, we are always in debt to the past, we should determine that the future is in our debt, and draw on it. Why let our future lie idle while we need succour? For instance, to-morrow I am to have what saves my reputation in the battle to-day: shall I not take it at once? The military commander who acts on that principle overcomes his adversary to a certainty. "You, Richie, the member for this borough of Chippenden, have won solid ground. I guarantee it to you. And you go straight from the hustings, or the first taste of parliamentary benches, to Sarkeld: you take your grandad's proposition to Prince Ernest: you bring back

the prince's acceptance to the squire. Can you hope to have a princess without a battle for her?" More and much more in this strain, until—for he could read me and most human beings swiftly on the surface, notwithstanding the pressure of his fancifulness—he perceived that talking influenced me far less than activity, and so after a hurried breakfast and an innocuous glance at the damp morning papers, we started to the money-lender's, with Jennings to lend his name. We were in Chippenden close upon the hour my father had named, bringing to the startled electors the first news of their member's death.

During the heat of the canvass for votes I received a kind letter from the squire in reply to one of mine, wherein he congratulated me on my prospects of success, and wound up: "Glad to see it announced you are off with that princess of yours. Show them we are as proud as they, Harry, and a fig for the whole foreign lot! Come to Riversley soon, and be happy." What did that mean? Heriot likewise said in a letter: "So it's over? The proud prince kicks? You will not thank me for telling you now what you know I think about it." I appealed to my father. "Canvass! canvass!" cried he; and he persistently baffled me. It was from Temple I learnt that on the day of our starting for Chippenden, the newspapers contained a paragraph in large print flatly denying upon authority, that there was any foundation for the report of an intended marriage between the Princess of Eppenwelzen-Sarkeld

and an English gentleman. Then I remembered how that morning my father had flung the papers down, complaining of their dampness.

Would such denial have appeared without Ottilia's sanction?

My father proved I was harnessed to him; there was no stopping, no time for grieving. Pace was his specific. He dragged me the round of the voters; he gave dinners at the inn of true Liberals, and ate of them contentedly; he delivered speeches incessantly. The whole force of his serio-comic genius was alive in its element at Chippenden. From balls and dinners, and a sharp contest to maintain his position in town, he was down among us by the first morning train, bright as Apollo, and quite the sun of the place, dazzling the independent electors and their wives, and even me somewhat; amazing me, certainly. Dettermain, his lawyer, who had never seen him in action, and supposed he would treat an election as he did his case, with fits and starts of energy, was not less astonished, and tried to curb him.

"Mr. Dettermain, my dear sir, I apprehend it is the electoral maxim to woo the widowed borough with the tear in its eye, and I shall do so hotly, in a right masculine manner," my father said. "We have the start; and if we beat the enemy by nothing else we will beat him by constitution. We are the first in the field, and not to reap it is to acknowledge oneself deficient in the very first instrument with which grass was cut."

Our difficulty all through the election was to contend with his humour. The many triumphs it won for him, both in speech and in action, turned at least the dialectics of the argument against us, and amusing, flattering, or bewildering, contributed to silence and hold us passive. Political convictions of his own, I think I may say with truth, he had none. He would have been just as powerful, after his fashion, on the Tory side, pleading for Mr. Normanton Hipperdon; more, perhaps: he would have been more in earnest. His store of political axioms was Tory; but he did remarkably well, and with no great difficulty, in confuting them to the wives of voters, to the voters themselves, and at public assemblies. Our adversary was redoubtable; a promising Opposition member, ousted from his seat in the North—a handsome man, too, which my father admitted, and wealthy, being junior partner in a city banking firm. Anna Penrhys knew him, and treacherously revealed some of the enemy's secrets, notably concerning what he termed our incorrigible turn for bribery.

"And that means," my father said, "that Mr. Hipperdon does not possess the art of talking to the ladies. I shall try him in repartee on the hustings. I must contrive to have our Jorian at my elbow."

The task of getting Jorian to descend upon such a place as Chippenden worried my father more than electoral anxieties. Jorian wrote: "My best wishes to you. Be careful of your heads. The habit of the

Anglo-Saxon is to conclude his burlesques with a play of cudgels. It is his notion of freedom, and at once the exordium and peroration of his eloquence. Spare me the Sussex accent on your return."

My father read out the sentences of this letter with admiring bursts of indignation at the sarcasms, and an evident idea that I inclined to jealousy of the force displayed.

"But we must have him," he said; "I do not feel myself complete without Jorian."

So he made dispositions for a concert to be given in Chippenden town. Jenny Chassediane was invited down to sing, and Jorian came in her wake, of course. He came to suffer tortures. She was obliging enough to transform me into her weapon of chastisement upon the poor fellow for his behaviour to her at the Ball—atrocious, I was bound to confess: in my opinion, very much worse towards my father. On this point she hesitated just long enough to imply a doubt whether, under any circumstances, the dues of men should be considered before those of the sex, and then struck her hands together with enthusiasm for my father, who was, she observed—critical in millinery in the height of her ecstacy—the most majestic, charming, handsome Henri III. imaginable, the pride and glory of the assembly, only one degree too rosy at night for the tone of the lavender, needing a touch of French hands, and the merest trifle in want of compression about the waistband. She related that a certain Prince Henri

d'Angleterre had buzzed at his ear annoyingly. "Et Gascoigne, où est-il?" called the King, and the Judge stepped forth to correct the obstreperous youth. The judge was Jennings, clearly prepared by my father to foil the Prince—no other than Edbury. It was incomprehensible to me that my father should tolerate the latter's pranks; unless, indeed, he borrowed his name to bonds of which I heard nothing. Mademoiselle Chassediane vowed that her own dress was ravishing. She went attired as a boudoir-shepherdess, or demurely-coquettish Sèvres-china Ninette, such of whom Louis Quinze would chuck the chin down the deadly-introductory walks of Versailles. The reason of her desiring to go was the fatal sin of curiosity, and, therefore, her sex's burden, not hers. Jorian was a Mousquetaire, with plumes and ruffles prodigious, and a hen's heart beneath his cock's feathers. "Pourtant j'y allai. I saw your great ladies, how they carry themselves when they would amuse themselves, and, mon Dieu! Paris has done its utmost to grace their persons, and the length of their robes did the part of Providence in bestowing height upon them, parceque, vous savez, Monsieur, c'est extraordinaire comme ils ont les jambes courtes, ces Anglaises!" Our aristocracy, however, was not so bad in that respect as our bourgeoisie; yet it was easy to perceive that our female aristocracy, though they could ride, had never been drilled to walk:—"de belles femmes, oui; seulement, tenez, je n'admire ni les yeux de vache, ni de souris, ni même ceux de verre comme

ornament feminin. Avec de l'embonpoint elles font de l'effect, mais maigre il n'y a aucune illusion possible." This vindictive critic smarted, with cause, at the recollection of her walk out of the rooms. Jorian's audacity or infatuation quitted him immediately after he had gratified her whim. The stout Mousquetaire placed her in a corner, and enveloped her there, declaring that her petition had been that she might come to see, not to be seen,—as if, she cried out tearfully, the two wishes must not necessarily exist together, like the masculine and the feminine in this world! Prince Hal, acting the most profligate period of his career, espied her behind the Mousquetaire's moustache, and did not fail to make much of his discovery. In a perilous moment for the reputation of the Ball, my father handed him over to Gascoigne, and conducted Jenny in a leisurely walk on his arm out of the rooms.

"Il est comme les Romains," she said: "he never despairs for himself. It is a Jupiter! If he must punish you he confers a dignity in doing it. Now I comprehend that with such women as these grandes dames Anglaises I should have done him harm but for his greatness of soul."

Some harm, I fancied, must have been done, in spite of his boast to the contrary. He had to be in London every other night, and there were tales current of intrigues against him which had their sources from very lofty regions. But in Chippenden he threw off London, just as lightly as in London he discarded

Chippenden. No symptom of personal discouragement, or of fatigue, was betrayed in his face. I spoke once of that paragraph purporting to emanate from Prince Ernest.

"It may," he said. "Business! Richie."

He set to counting the promises of votes, disdaining fears and reflections. Concerts, cricket-matches, balls, dinner-parties, and the round of the canvass, and speech-making at our gatherings, occupied every minute of my time, except on Saturday evenings, when I rode over to Riversley with Temple to spend the Sunday. Temple, always willing to play second to me, and a trifle melancholy under his partial eclipse—which, perhaps, suggested the loss of Janet to him—would have it that this election was one of the realizations of our boyish dreams of greatness. Heriot did not come to help me through my contest, for the reason, scarcely credible to his friends, that he was leading some wealthy lady to the altar. Janet's brows were gloomy at his name. That he, who was her model of gallantry, should marry in hot haste for money, degraded also her, who admired and liked him, and had, it may be, in a fit of natural rallying from grief, borne her part in a little game of trifling with him. The sentiments of Julia Bulsted were not wounded, by any means. She rejoiced to hear of Walter Heriot's having sense at last: to marry for money was the best thing he could do; and she rather twitted Janet for objecting, as a woman, to what was a compliment, and should be a comfort, to a jealous mind.

The ladies were working rosettes for me. My aunt Dorothy talked very anxiously about the day appointed by my father to repay the large sum expended. All hung upon that day, she said, speaking from her knowledge of the squire. She was moved to an extreme distress by the subject.

"He is confident, Harry; but where can he obtain the money? If your grandfather sees it invested in your name in Government securities, he will be satisfied, not otherwise: nothing less will satisfy him; and if that is not done, he will join you and your father together in his mind; and as he has hitherto treated one he will treat both. I know him. He is just, to the extent of his vision; but he will not be able to separate you. He is aware that your father has not restricted his expenses since they met; he will say you should have used your influence."

She insisted on this, until the tears streamed from her eyes, telling me that my grandfather was the most upright and unsuspicious of men, and precisely on that account the severest when he thought he had been deceived. The fair chances of my election did not console her, as it did me by dazzling me. She affirmed strongly that she was sure my father expected success at the election to be equivalent to the promised restitution of the money, and begged me to warn him that nothing short of the sum squandered would be deemed sufficient at Riversley. My dear aunt, good woman though she was, seemed to me to be waxing miserly.

The squire had given her the name of Parsimony; she had vexed him, Janet told me, by subscribing a miserable sum to a sailors' asylum that he patronized—a sum he was ashamed to see standing as the gift of a Beltham; and she had stopped the building of a wing of her village school-house, designed upon his plan. Altogether, she was fretful and distressful; she appeared to think that I could have kept my father in better order. Riversley was hearing new and strange reports of him. But how could I at Chippenden thwart his proceedings in London. Besides, he was serving me indefatigably.

It can easily be imagined what description of banter he had to meet and foil.

"This gentleman is obliging enough to ask me, 'How about the Royal Arms?' If in his extreme consideration he means to indicate *my* Arms, I will inform him that they are open to him; he shall find entertainment for man and beast; so he is doubly assured of a welcome."

Questioned whether he did not think he was entitled to be rated at the value of half-a-crown, he protested that whatever might be the sum of his worth, he was pure coin, of which neither party in Chippenden could accuse the silver of rubbing off; and he offered forthwith an impromptu apologue of a copper penny that passed itself off for a crown-piece, and deceived a portion of the country: that was why (with a wave of the arm over the Hipperdon faction) it had a certain number of

backers; for everybody on whom the counterfeit had been foisted, praised it to keep it in the currency.

"Now, gentlemen, I apprehend that Chippenden is not the pocket-borough for Hipperdon coin. Back with him to the Mint! and, with your permission, we will confiscate the first syllable of his name, while we consign him to oblivion, with a hip, hip, hip, hurrah for Richmond!"

The cheers responded thunderingly, and were as loud when he answered a "How 'bout the Dauphin?" by saying that it was the Tory hotel, of which he knew nothing.

"A cheer for old Roy!" Edbury sung out.

My father checked the roar, and turned to him.

"Marquis of Edbury, come to the front!"

Edbury declined to budge, but the fellows round him edged aside to show him a mark for my father's finger.

"Gentlemen," this is the young Marquis of Edbury, a member of the House of Lords by right of his birth, born to legislate for you and me. He, gentlemen, makes our laws. Examine him, hear him, meditate on him."

He paused cruelly for Edbury to open his mouth. The young lord looked confounded, and from that moment behaved becomingly.

"He might have been doing mischief to-morrow," my father said to me, and by letting me conceive his adroitness a matter of design, comforted me with proofs

of intelligent power, and made me feel less the melancholy conjunction of a piece of mechanism and a piece of criticism, which I was fast growing to be in the contemplation of the agencies leading to honour in our land. Edbury whipped his four in hand to conduct our voters to the poll. We had to pull hard against Tory interest. It was a sharp, dubious, hot day—a day of outcries against undue influence and against bribery—a day of beer and cheers and the insanest of tricks to cheat the polling-booth. Old John Thresher of Dipwell, and Farmer Eckerthy drove over to Chippenden to afford me aid and countenance, disconcerting me by the sight of them, for I associated them with Janet rather than with Ottilia, and it was towards Ottilia that I should have felt myself rising when the figures increased their pace in my favour, and the yeasty mob surrounding my father's superb four-horsed chariot responded to his orations by proclaiming me victor.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Richmond," Dettermain said. "Up to this day I have had my fears that we should haul more moonshine than fish in our net. Your father has accomplished prodigies."

My father, with the bloom of success on his face, led me aside soon after a safe majority of upwards of seventy had been officially announced. "Now, Richie," said he, "you are a Member. Now to the squire away! Thank the multitude and off, and as quick to Sarkeld as you well can; and tell the squire from me that I pardon his suspicions. I have landed you a Member—that will

satisfy him. I am willing, tell him . . . you know me competent to direct mines . . . bailiff of his estates—whatever he pleases to effect a reconciliation. I must be in London to-night—I am in the thick of the fray there. No matter: go, my son."

He embraced me. It was not a moment for me to catechise him, though I could see that he was utterly deluded.

Between moonlight and morning, riding with Temple and Captain Bulsted on either side of me, I drew rein under the red Grange windows, tired, and in love with its air of sleepy grandeur. Janet's window was open. I hailed her. "Has he won?" she sang out in the dark of her room, as though the cry of delight came upon the leap from bed. She was dressed. She had commissioned Farmer Eckerthy to bring her the news at any hour of the night. Seeing me, she clapped hands. "Harry, I congratulate you a thousand times." She had wit to guess that I should never have thought of coming had not I been the winner. I could just discern the curve and roll of her famed thick brown hair in the happy shrug of her shoulder, and imagined the full stream of it as she leaned out of window to talk to us. Janet herself unfastened the hall-door bolts. She caressed the horses, feverishly exulting, with charming subdued laughter of victory and welcome, and amused us by leading my horse round to stables, and whistling for one of the lads, playing what may, now and then, be a pretty feature in a young woman of character—the

fair tom-boy girl. She and her maid prepared coffee and toast for us, and entered the hall, one after the other, laden with dishes of cold meat; and not until the captain had eaten well did she tell him slyly that somebody, whom she had brought to Riversley yesterday, was abed and asleep upstairs. The slyness and its sisterly innocence lit up our eyes, and our hearts laughed. Her cheeks were deliciously overcoloured. We stole I know not what from the night and the day, and conventional circumstances, and rallied Captain Bulsted, and behaved as decorous people who treat the night properly, and live by rule, do not quite do. Never since Janet was a girl had I seen her so spirited and responsive: the womanly armour of half-reserve was put away. We chatted with a fresh-hearted natural young creature that forfeited not a particle of her ladyship while she made herself our comrade in talk and frolic.

Janet and I walked part of the way to the station with Temple, who had to catch an early train, and returning—the song of skylarks covering us—joined hands, having our choice between nothing to say, and the excess; perilous both. We did not part without such a leave-taking as is held to be the privilege of lovers.

CHAPTER II.

A FIRST STRUGGLE WITH MY FATHER.

JANET'S desire that her grandada should taste of her happiness, sent her to intercept him on his way to the breakfast-table. The blush of her cheek sufficed. I knew what had occurred when he hailed me freshly, rubbing his hands. "So you're one of the Commons, Hal? Whacking majority? No? You're in, though, like the thief who filched St. Peter's keys.—'Come out,' says Peter. 'No,' says Bob Thief, 'I was a first-rate thief, more than your match t'other side the gate, and now I'm here for the reward of my craft,' says he, 'I'm washed white in a jiffy.'—All he had to do was to learn to sing. Lord forgive us! and let's to prayers. Harry there's a seat for you next to Janet. Captain and his wife'll take chairs opposite. Dorothy, my dear, we can't wait for them. Sooner breakfast's over the better; I want to have a talk with Mr. Hal. Harry, boy, I shall drink your health to-night. We'll scrape together a party. Janet, my girl, I don't mind a dance. The

pleasure of life is to feel at home in your own house and deuced few who do."

Notwithstanding the continued absence of Captain Bulsted and Julia, the squire insisted on my taking a chair beside Janet's; and I certainly felt a difference in being seated near, or away, from her. The hot flush of yesterday's triumph had not cooled. At a little distance, I yearned to have her within reach of an arm, but I could weigh her looks and actions. Close to her, close upon touching her, the temptation was lightly resisted, but my senses accepted everything she did, uncritically. And they might well do so. She supposed that we were one at heart, and betrothed; and a marvellously alluring, faintly-shadowed impossibility for her eyes to dwell hard or long on mine in the newness of her happiness, would have pleased even the critic I no more could be. Nor was there too much of this, as with damsels and dames inclining to push their prettinesses by overacting the delicate emotion. Her smile was not the accustomed staring daylight one, and had narrowed and gentler dimples. The frown of her marked eyebrows was rare, and when it came quivered. It never had been a frown of darkness; now it was like a bird alighting. She talked of the election: she wished she had been there.

"Just as well go to battle," said the squire; and eyeing her: "I believe you, my dear. You're the girl to back a husband. No; you keep out of the dust. Don't you be henchman to your lord and master

till the house is attacked. Tough work yesterday, Hal?"

"And, Harry, why were you all in white?" Janet interposed.

"Oho! they floured him, did they?" the squire laughed.

"There was an idea in it, I am sure," said Janet.

"Meant, 'I'm a clean-looking fellow, the right sort of man for you;' eh, Hal?"

"Something the Romans did, or the Greeks, grandada, depend upon it."

She nodded knowingly at a turn of mine for tiny pedantries.

"What was it, Hal? Let's hear."

"Well, sir, it was a white suit in the morning."

"Top to toe? Hat and all?"

"Cap-à-pie, sir."

"Humph," he put on a right English pucker of the features. "Ha! All in white. Why, 'mn it! that's a penitent's dress. Was that the idea? Long sheet and candles? Didn't they call you a crowing chorister? I think I should have chaffed you, Mr. Hal. Froth's white, so's goose, curate, eggflip, give-up-the-ghost, oysters, and the liver that hoists the feather. I'd have been down upon you; couldn't ha' kept my tongue off you, if I'd been there. White! by the Lord, I'd ha' clapped a round of orange-blossoms on you. Why, you must have looked as if Lot's wife had dropped you after she turned her head back. All in white, by George!

like a candidate for the sepulchre. Did you go about horizontal? Vote for the corpse! Be dished, Hal, if that white suit was your own idea!"

"There I'm against you, grandada," said Janet, and appealed to my aunt Dorothy, who was of her opinion that the squire had better not be allowed to catch scent of my father in Chippenden, and observed: "Harry always had a liking for light colours; so had his mother."

"A little ballast won't do him harm. A pitcher o' common sense at his elbow!" rejoined the squire. "Hang that 'all in white!' I shall have a nightmare o' that. It's not English. I hate a fellow in a Tom Fool's uniform. Fancy how you'd look in a caricature. Wonder the mob didn't borrow you to chalk their ale-house scores! White! why, election time's the time for showing your colours."

"Yellow and blue stand out well on white," said Janet.

We saw that he was scenting hard in the track of my father, for sign of which he asked first: "Were you the only one in white?" And then: "How much did this election cost you?"

I stopped him by saying: "To begin with, we may put down the cost of the white hat for five-and-twenty shillings."

"Oh, I shall pay all the costs, and I mean to look at the items for myself," said he.

Inspired by Janet, he recovered his cheerfulness,

but it was a fleeting glimpse of domestic sunshine. He carried me off to the library, where, telling me he had seen by his girl's face that all was right, he wished to know whether I objected to his driving over to Ilchester at once: nothing but a formality, he remarked. The formality terminated, a word to his lawyer, and the parson had only to publish the banns. It was painful to see him waving his flag of contentment from the summit of his house of cards, which a breath from me was to overturn instantly. I tempered it as well as I could; and indeed I was guilty of something more. We were threatened with a repetition of previous scenes between us. "I'm an old man," he said, almost tremblingly, but frowning, at my request to him not to hurry me. "That princess of yours has thrown you over, what do you want to wait for? A month's enough. I mean to see my family floated in a cradle before I'm off, and a girl like my Janet to look after it. She won't breed dolts nor cowards. I can leave her, with a heart content, to suckle Englishmen. You're not going to keep me in suspense now you're come to your senses? It seems to be you that's for playing the girl."

To my mind it seemed that Janet might have played her sex's part, if but a very little. Not reflecting on her natural impulse (for she loved him) to make him happy in his heart's dearest wish, my vision of her was ruffled and darkened by the unfeminine precipitancy. I admitted that a kiss was as good as a pledge in the estimation of a frankly-natured girl who respected the

man she loved, but considering that no distinct word had been spoken by me, I thought she should also have delayed her confidences. It was true that she had betrayed herself by no more than a blush and altered eyes; the old man dwelt on it to prove his penetration. I blamed her because it was necessary to me that she should appear blameworthy, and worthy merely of such esteem as the wording of his praises of her kindled in the imagination of a most exquisitely-refining idiot. We entered upon the well-known wrangle; the misunderstandings, the explications, the highly-seasoned phrasings of wrath: with this difference, that I did consent slightly to temporize, and he to coax and bribe. He hinted at the matter of the banker's book as a thing of small account, supposing I now meant to behave like a man. I was tempted. A reflux of sentiment brought Ottilia's voice to my ear. I said bluntly: "I can't be bound. I can do nothing until I hear from the princess herself that she refuses me."

He seized on the salient feature promptly: "So you stick 'twixt two women, do you, ready for one or t'other!" His exclamation, for a comment on a man in such a position, was withering.

He offered to pay my father's debts under five thousand pounds.

I could not help smiling.

"Sneer away," said he. "The fellow lets you think he snaps his fingers at money. He's a hound by day and a badger by night after it. Come now,

quick, Harry, you! are we where we stood when he tried to palaver me in my bailiff's cottage? or does all go easy, with a shake o' the hand? I'm a man of my word. I gave you my word about your princess, but not if you turn out a liar, the fellow's confederate, hunting in couples with him, and waiting for my death to shoot up my money in fireworks. And you can't have her!—she's rejected you; we have it printed. Janet showed it to me. What are you lifting your eyebrows at? She had a right to show it. She smuggles a lot, I wager; I don't always see my own newspapers! Come: do you take her, or not?"

I stated my regret that, as I stood at present . . . He cut me short. "Then tell him I expect to hear from him on the day appointed—five days from the present, that is. I won't have excuses. I'll have the money down. It's for you, not for me—it's your money. But he shall be as good as his word to me—fiddle his word!—or I draw back mine to you, and you may go courting your princess on your own funds. There, go, or I shall be in for a fit of the gout. I generally have a twinge whenever I catch sight of you now."

Janet was walking on the lawn. We both glanced at the window, and he muttered, "None of that game of yours of two at a time. I won't have my girl worried. You think she can't feel—you don't know her yet. She has felt your conduct all her life: she grows straight and strong because she never pities herself. Girl's as sweet as a nut—she's straight as a lily.

She's a compassionate thing. You don't think she's not been proposed for? I've kept her out of the way of every other young fellow as much as I could. I haven't been kind—I haven't been kind to her. May God bless her! and I hope she'll forgive me." The old man's voice came through tears—I had not to look in his face to be aware of it. The pain of evading Janet was sharp, and stung pride as well as tenderness. Her figure on the lawn, while my old grandfather spoke of her, wore the light of individual character which defined her clearly from other women. She was raising the head of a rose at her arm's length, barely bending her neck to it, nor the line of her back. 'A compassionate thing,' as he who loved her said of her, the act and the attitude combined to symbolize the orderly, simple unpretendingness of her nature. A flower had a flower's place in her regard, and, I knew, a man a man's. She could stoop low to me,—to me this stately girl could bend, and take the shapes and many colours of a cloud running up the wind. Her heart was mine. I felt as though I were tossing and catching, and might, at one moment, miss it, when I had left the house.

I felt, too, that I must sound my nature for the cause of these perpetual slippings from self-respect, and, while following out the Platonic inquiry as to Temperance, determined to ensure it, in the modern sense, for the beginning of a new scheme of life that should tame my blood, and help me to be my own master.

Grievously dissatisfied with myself, I was rendered

more competent to deal with my father. The blow had to be struck at once; so I told him that the squire expected the money to be paid, adding that if it was not paid, I should have to consider myself disinherited. "And this is final, sir, you may be sure of it." I had come prepared for verbosity. He looked profoundly grave, and was silent. Casting an eye on him after a while, I saw that he was either meditating to a great depth, or was in a collapse of his powers. He breathed heavily, his hands resting on the length of an arm-chair, lifted and fell. Was this an evidence of feeling, of reflection, or of stupefaction? I pressed him:—"Borrowing a sum like that is out of the question; besides, I won't consent to the attempt. Would it be as well to write to Prince Ernest for the amount sunk over there?"

Without hearing a word from him, my quickly-lighted suspicions gathered that this sum had been repaid, in which case it had, to a certainty, been spent.

"Then we can't reckon upon it. We have nothing, as far as I can see. I don't know what I have been fancying possible. I believed you when you said you would be ready for the day. Are there still any resources you have unknown to me?"

He tapped on the arm-chair. "Let me think, Richie,—let me think."

His act of thinking resembled that of sleeping. I stated my intention to return to him at dinner-time,

and went off in search of my consoler, Temple, of whom I asked the favour of a bed under his happy roof.

"It's your own room there," said Temple. "Do you go to the House to-night? I'll sit up for you. Heriot was here this morning."

He was too full of a catastrophe that had overwhelmed Heriot's marriage-ceremony to listen much to me. The gist of it was, that a gipsy girl known to us two had presented herself—he was not sure whether before the altar or at the bride's house—and effectually stopped the marriage. Heriot came to him in a laughing fury, to say that he stood released. He was mortally dreading to behold the affair in newspaper print—which seemed to be his principal concern; and I was not sorry I had a companion in that most melancholy of apprehensions. Sorry for Heriot himself no friend of his could well be. He had a way of his own of regarding things, and a savage humour defying sympathy. He confided to Temple his modest wish to catch and 'thrash' the black girl, out of compliment to her predilection for a beating with hands rather than wordy abuse. Her fiery boldness had captured his admiration, though it made him smart.

"No, but just fancy!" Temple continued saying, even after I had related my weightier circumstances.

Like others who contrive always to keep the plain straight lines of the working world, he enjoyed from compassionate amusement the deviations of his friends,

and he obtained his recreation in that manner, with a certain abuse of his natural delicacy, for he would go on speculating: "What can she have meant by it?" when a thought might have told him that she must have had, by her interpretation, a right to act as she had done. Perceiving this at last, his feast on the startling and the dramatic was displaced by a sense of outraged propriety, and he was hardly like my old friend at all in the way he spoke of the girl.

My father had been thinking to very little purpose during my absence. He denounced the squire's hardness and obstinacy in not being satisfied with a princess and a Member of Parliament. The interval had restored his tongue to him. Yet he had a scheme, he said, a plan, a method: but he was impatient for the dinner-bell, and would not communicate it. He looked exhausted, several times he begged me to preserve my good spirits, declaring that I suffered my health to droop, and there was no occasion for it, none whatever: I did not take wine enough.

The mention of wine as a resource in a situation like ours revolted me. I conjured him to abandon his house, society, the whole train of his extravagances, all excepting, if he pleased, the legal proceedings, which were, I ventured to observe, hopeless in the opinion of most unprejudiced persons fit to judge of them.

"Dettermain and Newson," he rejoined, "have opened a battery that will have immediate effect."

Collecting himself, as if he felt that he had been guilty of talking reason to one bordering upon lunacy— "Wine, Richie, wine is what you want."

"I shall drink none, sir," was my reply.

"Richie, your pulse," said he, and was for insisting on the physician's sagest exhibition of his science. "I have despatched a letter to Sarkeld this afternoon. *Now* you light up, my dear boy. A taste of our empress — not margravine! I remember Mr. Temple's excellent word — and a bottle of emperor will bring you round. Why, one would suppose we were beaten. The world has never yet said that to me."

Resolutions coming on a spur of disgust may be reckoned upon to endure for an evening. I was challenged to drink at table, and declined. Temple responded to the invitation manfully.

My father complimented him.

"I was telling Richie upstairs in my dressing-room I bear in mind your capital 'margravine of wines,' Mr. Temple. It brings back the day, the sunset, and the two dear lads wondering and happy, and making me happy. Not to drink good wine is to cut yourself violently from every glorious day you have lived, and intend to live. My wine is my friend, my prime minister, my secret cabinet, my jewel-case, my Aladdin's garden. I gain my cause fifty times over on wine. On the bare notion of water, by heaven! it floats drowned, like a young woman I saw once, a pretty creature, stretched out on straw: she had dressed herself with

great care. I have detested water ever since: 'tis a common assassin, Richie!"

He challenged me again. My mind being now set against him, I heard nonsense in everything he uttered, and I reviewed the days when I had treasured his prolific speech, then marvelled, then admired and partly envied, then tolerated, then striven to tolerate. It had become scarcely bearable to my nerves to hear him out.

"I once, Mr. Temple," he took refuge with his wine-drinking ally, "while affording shelter far from conveyances to a lady under an umbrella, during a thunderstorm in this identical London—which led, by by the way, to an agreeable intimacy considerably more to my profit than I could have anticipated in my dreams —Kellington, her name was, now departed—behold the very poorest, squalid, refuse-wretch of all mankind opposite in the street receiving on his shoulders the contents of the house-spout. It has never been known to me why he preferred the house-spout to the shower. We may *say* we do. The instinct of humanity is entirely opposed to it in practice. Mistress Kellington—she was a maiden lady of some seven-and-thirty: we do not, Mr. Temple, ever place a lady's age exactly on the banks of forty, for fear she should fall over on the other side, where the river is: I commend you to the rule through life—fumbled after her purse. I stated at the time that it would be to pay for a shiver. I am not uncharitable. I contended then, and do still, the

wretch committed a deed of unmitigated wantonness; I would have had him castigated: an infinitely worse act than that of the unhappy girl who cast herself into the water headlong! But the effect on me of a man drinking water where there is wine is to remind me of both. The horrors of an insane destitution pour down my back."

He shivered in earnest, calling to me: "Come, Richie," with his wine-glass in hand.

I nodded, and touched the wine with my lips.

He sent his man Tollingby for the oldest wine in his cellar: a wine by no possibility paid for, I reflected in the midst of his praises of the wine. This buying and husbanding of choice wine upon a fictitious credit struck me as a key to his whole career, and I begged firmly to be excused from touching it.

"He doubts me," my father addressed Temple—"Richie doubts me. He doubts my devotion to him; he doubts my cause; he doubts my ability to perform my obligations and my particular promise."

Drawing a breath like one who has taken a blow, he talked excitedly, forgetting the men in attendance, and then subsided, only to renew his florid self-justifications and proofs of his affection for a son that would not drink wine with him. He made a better case of it in the delivery, from his own point of view, than I am doing, and succeeded in impressing it upon Temple, whose responding "Yes" and "Yes" between appreciative sips of the old wine, showed how easily two

lively spirits, at work upon him in unison, could unsettle a sedate judgment. But I was dumb. My father grew agitated. The footmen were evidently unused to see him in that condition. He kept away from family subjects until the table had been cleared, and the decanters went round.

"One glass, Richie, of the very lightest and purest claret ever shipped. Will you now, to humour me?"

I shook my head.

He struck the table, declaring that I did him injury. Unjust, unfilial, ungrateful, blind, were some of his epithets. I heard him speak of going into bondage for my sake, of his having reserved that bitter cup to toss it off in case of necessity on my behalf, and of a lady of wealth whom he respected and would swear to love for her service to his son. While Woman lived, he said he had unlimited resources, and snapped his fingers at fate; Woman was his treasury of happy accidents, his guardian goddess, his guarantee of rosiest possibilities. All with a barely intelligible volubility speeded along by incoherent conjunctions, dashes, parentheses. I feared for his reason—such as was native to him. The wine was somewhat to blame. He drank copiously. I did not rebut his accusation that I meant to read him a lesson. I would have had it a sharper one.

It was only when Temple and I were in the street, walking to his house, my sweeter home, that I discovered, upon a comparison of notes, my father to have signified his intention to repair our circumstances by

marrying a wealthy woman; which lady, Temple and I gathered from sundry intimations, could be no other than Lady Sampleman.

Now Jorian DeWitt had affirmed that the wealthy widow, Lady Sampleman, was to be had by my father for the asking. Placed as we were, I regarded the objections to his alliance with her in a mild light. She could lend me the money to appease the squire: that done, I could speedily repay it. I admitted, in a letter to my aunt Dorothy, the existing objections: but the lady had long been enamoured of him, I pleaded, and he was past the age for passionate affection, and would infallibly be courteous and kind. She was rich. We might count on her to watch over him carefully. Of course, with such a wife, he would sink to a secondary social sphere; was it to be regretted if he did? The letter was a plea for my own interests, barely veiled. At the moment of writing it, and moreover when I treated my father with especial coldness, my heart was far less warm in the contemplation of its pre-eminent aim than when I was suffering him to endanger it, almost without a protest. Janet and a peaceful Riversley, and a life of quiet English distinction, beckoned to me visibly, and not hatefully. The image of Ottilia conjured up pictures of a sea of shipwrecks, a scene of immeasurable hopelessness. Still, I strove towards that. My strivings were against my leanings, and imagining the latter, which involved no sacrifice of the finer sense of honour, to be in the direction of my

lower nature, I repelled them to preserve a lofty aim that led me through questionable ways.

"Can it be you, Harry," my aunt Dorothy's reply ran (I had anticipated her line of reasoning, though not her warmth) "who advise him to this marriage from a motive so inexplicably unworthy? That you will repay her the money, I do not require your promise to assure me. The money is nothing. It is the prospect of her life and fortune which you are consenting, if not urging him, to imperil for your own purposes. Are you really prepared to imitate in him, with less excuse for doing it, the things you most condemn? Let it be checked at the outset. It cannot be. A marriage of inclination on both sides, prudent in a worldly sense, we might wish for him, perhaps, if he could feel quite sure of himself. His wife might persuade him not to proceed in his law-case. There, I have long seen his ruin. He builds such expectations on it! You speak of something worse than a mercenary marriage. I see this in your handwriting!—your approval of it! I have to check the whisper that tells me it reads like a conspiracy. Is she not a simpleton? Can you withhold your pity? and pitying, can you possibly allow her to be *entrapped?* Forgive my seeming harshness. I do not often speak to my Harry so. I do now because I must appeal to you, as the one chiefly responsible, on whose head the whole weight of a dreadful error will fall. The fatal mistake of not trusting to your grandfather's affection, and the working of a merciful Pro-

vidence, is to blame. Oh! my dearest, be guided by the purity of your feelings to shun doubtful means. I have hopes that after the first few weeks your grandfather will—I know he does not expect to find the engagement fulfilled—be the same to *you* that he was before he discovered the extravagance. You are in Parliament, and I am certain that, by keeping as much as possible to *yourself*, and living soberly, your career there will persuade him to meet your wishes."

The letter was of great length. In conclusion, she entreated me to despatch an answer by one of the early morning trains; entreating me once more to cause "any actual deed" to be at least postponed. The latter revealed what I had often conceived might be.

CHAPTER III.

MY FATHER IS MIRACULOUSLY RELIEVED BY FORTUNE.

My rejoinder to my aunt Dorothy laid stress on my father's pledge of his word of honour as a gentleman to satisfy the squire on a stated day. I shrank from the idea of the Riversley crow over him. As to the lady, I said we would see that her money was fastened to her securely before she committed herself to the deeps. The money to be advanced to me would lie at my bankers', in my name, untouched: it would be repaid in the bulk after a season. This I dwelt on particularly, both to satisfy her and to appease my sense of the obligation. An airy pleasantry in the tone of this epistle amused me while writing it and vexed me when it had gone. But a letter sent, upon special request, by railway, should not, I thought, be couched in the ordinary strain. Besides one could not write seriously of a person like Lady Sampleman. I consulted my aunt Dorothy's scruples by stopping my father on his way to the lady. His carriage was at the door: I suggested

money-lenders: he had tried them all. He begged me to permit him to start: but it was too ignominious to think of its being done under my very eyes, and I refused. He had tried the money-lenders yesterday. They required a mortgage solider than expectations for the sum we wanted. Dettermain and Newson had declined to undertake the hypothecation of his annuity. Providence pointed to Sampleman.

"You change in a couple of nights, Richie," said he. "Now I am always the identical man. I shall give happiness to one sincerely good soul. I have only to offer myself—let me say in becoming modesty, I believe so. Let me go to her and have it over, for with me a step taken is a thing sanctified. I have in fact held her in reserve. Not that I think fortune has abandoned us: but a sagacious schemer will not leave everything to the worthy dame. I should have driven to her yesterday, if I had not heard from Dettermain and Newson that there was a hint of a negotiation for a compromise. Government is fairly frightened." He mused. "However, I slept on it, and arrived at the conclusion this morning that my old Richie stood in imminent jeopardy of losing the fruit of all my toil. The good woman will advance the money to her husband. When I pledged my word to the squire I had reason to imagine the two months a sufficient time. We have still a couple of days. I have heard of men who lost heart at the eleventh hour, and if they had only hung on, with gallant faith in themselves, they

would have been justified by the result. Faith works miracles. At least it allows time for them."

His fertile ingenuity spared mine the task of persuading him to postpone the drive to Lady Sampleman. But that he would have been prompt to go, at a word from me, and was actually about to go when I entered his house, I could not question.

He drove in manifest relief of mind to Dettermain and Newson's. An ignoble-looking rascal, calling himself Kellington, ran some steps after his carriage. Unable to obtain the shedding of a single glance, he slunk back to me, and gabbled a tale of his sister's having bequeathed all her money to Roy Richmond to live in splendour, leaving him destitute. A tale delivered in alcoholic breath under a tipsy hat does not inspire confidence. I tossed him a sovereign, fancying I had heard my father mention his sister's name.

"If you're Roy Richmond's son, sir," he said, "tell him from me Mrs. Disher can't keep her husband's bills in the ledger much longer, and old Bagenhope's drinking himself to death; and there's his last witness gone. I'm no enemy to him, nor to you, sir, as long as I get my pension. That's mine, I say."

Mrs. Waddy knew of this man Kellington as being "one of the pensioners."

I had an appointment with Mr. Temple at a great political club, to meet the gentlemen who were good enough to undertake the introduction of the infant member to the House of Commons. My incessantly

twisting circumstances foiled the pleasure and pride due to me. From the club I bent my steps to Temple's district, and met in the street young Eckart vom Hof, my champion and second on a memorable occasion, fresh upon London, and looking very Germanic in this drab forest of our city people. He could hardly speak of Deutschland for enthusiasm at the sight of the moving masses. His object in coming to England, he assured me honestly, was to study certain editions of Tibullus in the British Museum. When he deigned to speak of Sarkeld, it was to say that Prince Hermann was frequently there. I gave him no chance to be sly, though he pushed for it, at a question of the Princess Ottilia's health.

The funeral pace of the block of cabs and omnibuses engrossed his attention. Suddenly the Englishman afforded him an example of the reserve of impetuosity we may contain. I had seen my aunt Dorothy in a middle line of cabs coming from the City, and was darting in a twinkling among wheels and shafts and nodding cab-horse noses to take her hand and know the meaning of her presence in London. She had family business to do: she said no more. I mentioned that I had checked my father for a day or two. She appeared grateful. Her anxiety was extreme that she might not miss the return train, so I relinquished her hand, commanded the cabman to hasten, and turned to rescue Eckart—too young and faithful a collegian not to follow his friend, though it were into the lion's den—from a

terrific entanglement of horseflesh and vehicles brawled over by a splendid collision of tongues. Secure on the pavement again, Eckart humbly acknowledged that the English tongue could come out upon occasions. I did my best to amuse him. Whether it amused him to see me take my seat in the House of Commons, and hear a debate in a foreign language, I cannot say; but the only pleasure of which I was conscious at that period lay in the thought that he or his father, Baron vom Hof, might some day relate the circumstance at Prince Ernest's table, and fix in Ottilia's mind the recognition of my having tried to perform my part of the contract. Beggared myself, and knowing Prince Hermann to be in Sarkeld, all I hoped for was to show her I had followed the path she traced. My state was lower: besides misfortune I now found myself exalted only to feel my profound insignificance.

"The standard for the House is a man's ability to do things," said Charles Etherell, my friendly introductor, by whom I was passingly advised to preserve silence for two or three sessions.

He counselled the study of Foreign Affairs for a present theme. I talked of our management of them in the strain of Dr. Julius von Karsteg.

"That's journalism, or clippings from a bilious essay; it won't do for the House," he said. "Revile the House to the country, if you like, but not the country to the House."

When I begged him to excuse my absurdity, he

replied: "It's full of promise, so long as you're silent."

But to be silent was to be merely an obedient hound of the whip. And if the standard for the House was a man's ability to do things, I was in the seat of a better man. External sarcasms upon the House, flavoured with justness, came to my mind, but if these were my masters surrounding me, how indefinitely small must I be!

Leaving the House on that first night of my sitting, I received Temple's congratulations outside, and, as though the sitting had exhausted every personal sentiment, I became filled with his; under totally new sensations, I enjoyed my distinction through the perception of my old comrade's friendly jealousy.

"I'll be there, too, some day," he said, moaning at the prospect of an extreme age before such honours would befall him.

The society of Eckart prevented me from urging him to puff me up with his talk as I should have wished, and after I had sent the German to be taken care of by Mrs. Waddy, I had grown so accustomed to the worldly view of my position that I was fearing for its stability. Threats of a petition against me were abroad. Supposing the squire disinherited me, could I stand? An extraordinary appetite for wealth, a novel appreciation of it —which was, in truth, a voluntary enlistment into the army of mankind, and the adoption of its passions— pricked me with an intensity of hope and dread con-

cerning my dependence on my grandfather. I lay sleepless all night, tossing from Riversley to Sarkeld, condemned, it seemed, to marry Janet and gain riches and power by renouncing my hope of the princess and the glory belonging to her, unless I should within a few hours obtain a show of figures at my bankers'.

I had promised Etherell to breakfast with him. A note—a faint scream—despatched by Mrs. Waddy to Mr. Temple's house informed me that "the men" were upon them. If so, they were the forerunners of a horde, and my father was as good as extinguished. He staked everything on success; consequently, he forfeited pity. Good-by to ambition, I thought, and ate heartily, considering robustly the while how far lower than the general level I might avoid falling. The report of the debates in morning papers—doubtless, more flowing and, perhaps, more grammatical than such as I gave ear to over-night—had the odd effect on me of relieving me from the fit of subserviency into which the speakers had sunk me. A conceit of towering superiority took its place, and as Etherell was kind enough to draw me out and compliment me, I was attacked by a tragic sense of contrast between my capacities and my probable fortunes. Still, it was open to me to marry Janet. But this meant the loosening of myself with my own hand for ever from her who was my mentor and my glory, to gain whom I was in the very tideway. I could not submit to it, though the view was like that of a green field of the springs passed by a climber up the crags. I went

to Anna Penrhys to hear a woman's voice, and partly told her of my troubles. She had heard Mr. Hipperdon express his confident opinion that he should oust me from my seat. Her indignation was at my service as a loan: it sprang up fiercely and spontaneously in allusions to something relating to my father, of which the Marquis of Edbury had been guilty. "How you can bear it!" she exclaimed, for I was not wordy. The exclamation, however, stung me to put pen to paper—the woman was not so remote in me not to be roused by the woman. I wrote to Edbury and to Heriot, bidding him call on the young nobleman. Late at night I was at my father's door to perform the act of duty of seeing him, and hearing how he had entertained Eckart, if he was still master of his liberty. I should have known him better: I expected silence and gloom. The windows were lighted brilliantly. As the hall-door opened, a band of stringed and wood instruments commenced an overture. Mrs. Waddy came to me in the hall; she was unintelligible. One thing had happened to him at one hour of the morning, and another at another hour. He was at one moment suffering the hands of the "officers" on his shoulder. "And behold you, Mr. Harry! a knock, a letter from a messenger, and he conquers Government!" It struck me that the epitome of his life had been played in a day: I was quite incredulous of downright good fortune. He had been giving a dinner followed by a concert, and the deafening strains of the music clashed with my acerb spirit,

irritating me excessively. "Where are those men you spoke of?" I asked her. "Gone," she replied,—"gone long ago!"

"Paid?" said I.

She was afraid to be precise, but repeated that they were long since gone.

I singled Jorian DeWitt from among a crowd of loungers on the stairs and landing between the drawing-rooms. "Oh, yes, Government has struck its flag to him," Jorian said. "Why weren't you here to dine? Alphonse will never beat his achievement of to-day. Jenny and Carigny gave us a quarter-of-an-hour before dinner—a capital idea!—'VEUVE ET BACHELIER.' As if by inspiration. No preparation for it, no formal taking of seats. It seized amazingly—floated small talk over the soup beautifully."

I questioned him again.

"Oh, dear, yes; there can't be a doubt about it," he answered, airily. "Roy Richmond has won his game."

Two or three urgent men round a great gentleman were extracting his affable approbation of the admirable nature of the experiment of the Chassediane before dinner. I heard laudation of the dinner and the Chassediane, the music and the cook, down even to the sherry, which must have been answerable for the discussion among certain younger male guests of Lady Edbury's conduct in coming. I gathered that she had defied some opposition of her family. Edbury joined

this knot of talkers, saying: "He's a Jupiter! I shall take to swearing by him." Apparently they were aware of what had happened in the house at a particular hour of the morning. "Richmond!" Edbury nodded to me, with a queer semi-interrogation in his look, very like a dog's weighing the disposition of the hand that holds the stick. Otherwise it was not a face to betray secrets, for there was nothing but a sheet behind it. The ladies present were not, I could judge, such as my father would have surrounded Lady de Strode with, though they had titles, and were in the popular eye great ladies. I saw that Eckart was comfortably seated, and telling Jorian to provide for him in the matter of tobacco, I went to my room, confused beyond power of thought by the sensible command of fortune my father, fortune's sport at times, seemed really to have.

His statement of the circumstances bewildered me even more. He was in no hurry to explain them; when we met next morning he waited for me to question him, and said, "Yes. I think we have beaten them so far!" His mind was pre-occupied, he informed me, concerning the defence of a lady much intrigued against, and resuming the subject: "Yes, we have beaten them up to a point, Richie. And that reminds me: would you have me go down to Riversley and show the squire the transfer tickets? At any rate you can now start for Sarkeld, and you do, do you not? To-day: to-morrow at latest."

I insisted: "But how, and in what manner has this

money been paid?" The idea struck me that he had succeeded in borrowing it.

"Transferred to me in the Bank, and intelligence of the fact sent to Dettermain and Newson, my lawyers," he replied. "Beyond that, I know as little as you, Richie, though indubitably I hoped to intimidate them. If," he added, with a countenance perfectly simple and frank, "they expect me to take money for a sop, I am not responsible, as I by no means provoked it, for their mistake. I proceed. The money is useful to you, so I rejoice at it."

Five and twenty thousand pounds was the amount.

"No stipulation was attached to it?"

"None. Of course a stipulation was implied: but of that I am not bound to be cognizant."

"Absurd!" I cried: "it can't have come from the quarter you suspect."

"Where else?" he asked.

I thought of the squire, Lady Edbury, my aunt, Lady Sampleman, Anna Penrhys, some one or other of his frantic female admirers. But the largeness of the amount, and the channel selected for the payment, precluded the notion that any single person had come to succour him in his imminent need, and, as it chanced, mine.

Observing that my speculations wavered, he cited numerous instances in his life of the special action of Providence in his favour, and was bold enough to speak of a star, which his natural acuteness would have

checked his doing before me, if his imagination had not been seriously struck.

"You hand the money over to me, sir?" I said.

"Without a moment of hesitation, my dear boy," he melted me by answering.

"You believe you have received a bribe?"

"That is my entire belief—the sole conclusion I can arrive at. I will tell you, Richie: the old Marquis of Edbury once placed five thousand pounds to my account on a proviso that I should—neglect, is the better word, my case. I inherited from him at his death; of course his demise cancelled the engagement. He had been the friend of personages implicated. He *knew*. I suspect he apprehended the unpleasant position of a witness."

"But what was the stipulation you presume was implied?" said I.

"Something that passed between lawyers: I am not bound to be cognizant of it. Abandon my claims for a few thousands? Not for ten, not for ten hundred times the sum!"

To be free from his boisterous influence, which made my judgment as unsteady as the weather-glass in a hurricane, I left my house and went straight to Dettermain and Newson, who astonished me quite as much by assuring me that the payment of the money was a fact. There was no mystery about it. The intelligence and transfer papers, they said, had not been communicated to them by the firm they were opposed to, but by a

solicitor largely connected with the aristocracy; and his letter had briefly declared the unknown donator's request that legal proceedings should forthwith be stopped. They offered no opinion of their own. Suggestions of any kind, they seemed to think, had weight, and all of them an equal weight, to conclude from the value they assigned to every idea of mine. The name of the solicitor in question was Charles Adolphus Bannerbridge. It was, indeed, my old, one of my oldest friends; the same by whom I had been led to a feast and an evening of fun when a little fellow starting in the London streets. Sure of learning the whole truth from old Mr. Bannerbridge, I walked to his office and heard that he had suddenly been taken ill. I strode on to his house, and entered a house of mourning. The kind old man, remembered by me so vividly, had died overnight. Miss Bannerbridge perceived that I had come on an errand, and with her gentle good breeding led me to speak of it. She knew nothing whatever of the sum of money. She was, however, aware that an annuity had been regularly paid through the intervention of her father. I was referred by her to a Mr. Richards, his recently-established partner. This gentleman was ignorant of the whole transaction. Throughout the day I strove to combat the pressure of evidence in favour of the idea that an acknowledgment of special claims had been wrested from the enemy. Temple hardly helped me, though his solid sense was dead against the notions entertained by my father and

Jorian DeWitt, and others besides, our elders. The payment of the sum through the same channel which supplied the annuity, pointed distinctly to an admission of a claim, he inclined to think, and should be supposed to come from a personage having cause either to fear him or to assist him. He set my speculations astray by hinting that the request for the stopping of the case might be a blind. A gift of money, he said shrewdly, was a singularly weak method of inducing a man to stop the suit of a life-time. I thought of Lady Edbury; but her income was limited, and her expenditure was not:—of Lady Sampleman, but it was notorious that she loved her purse as well as my aunt Dorothy, and was even more, in the squire's phrase, "a petticoated parsimony." Anna Penrhys appeared the likelier, except for the fact that the commencement of the annuity was long before our acquaintance with her. I tried her on the subject. Her amazement was without a shadow of reserve. "It's Welsh, it's not English," she remarked. I knew no Welshwoman save Anna. "Do you know the whole of his history?" said she. Possibly one of the dozen unknown episodes in it might have furnished the clue, I agreed with her.

The sight of twenty-one thousand pounds placed to my credit in the Funds assuaged my restless spirit of investigation. My father's necessities had extracted four thousand. He pleaded for an excuse an unconscionable creditor, and was lightly exonerated by me, considering that I had determined to make a round of

payments as soon as the notification had fulfilled its mission at Riversley. My pending affair with Edbury kept me awaiting an answer from Heriot, and when that came I found that I had to run down to see a patient under nursing charge of Lady Maria Higginson over Durstan ridges. Letters from the squire and my aunt Dorothy urged me to betake myself to Riversley, there finally to decide upon what my course should be.

"Now that you have the money, pray," St. Parsimony wrote,—"pray be careful of it. Do not let it be encroached on. Remember it is to serve one purpose. It should be guarded strictly against every appeal for aid," &c., with much underlining.

My grandfather returned the papers. His letter said: "I shall not break my word. Please to come and see me before you take steps right or left."

So here was the dawn again.

I could in a day or two start for Sarkeld. Meanwhile, to give my father a lesson, I discharged a number of bills, and paid off the bond to which Edbury's name was attached. My grandfather, I knew, was too sincerely and punctiliously a gentleman in practical conduct to demand a further inspection of my accounts. These things accomplished, I took the train to see Heriot, instead of my own people; for he, I said to myself, was unwell, and Janet, I did not say to myself, was in suspense; moreover, I had a strong objection to being interrogated as to whether I had sold stock and spent a farthing of the money by Dorothy Beltham.

She had written two letters of a painfully miserly tone, warning me not to touch it. My heart was moved when driving within eyeshot of Riversley, but I cheated it, and set my face to Durstan, little imagining that adventures to change and colour the course of one's life may spring across the passage of a heath.

CHAPTER IV.

WITHIN AN INCH OF MY LIFE.

A SINGLE tent stood in a gully running from one of the gravel-pits of the heath, near an iron-red rillet, and a girl of Kiomi's tribe leaned over the lazy water at half length, striking it with her handkerchief. At a distance of about twice a stone's-throw from the new carriage-road between Durstan and Bulsted, I fancied from old recollections she might be Kiomi herself. This was not the time for her people to be camping on Durstan. Besides, I feared it improbable that one would find her in any of the tracks of her people. The noise of the wheels brought the girl's face round to me. She was one of those who were babies in the tents when I was a boy. We were too far apart for me to read her features. I lay back in the carriage, thinking that it would have been better for my poor little wild friend if I had never crossed the shadow of her tents. A life caught out of its natural circle is as much in danger of being lost as a limb given to a wheel in spinning machinery, so it

occurred to me, until I reflected that Prince Ernest might make the same remark, and deplore the damage done to the superior machinery likewise.

My movements appeared to interest the girl. She was up on a mound of the fast-purpling heath, shading her eyes to watch me, when I called at Bulsted lodge-gates to ask for a bed under Julia's roof that night. Her bare legs twinkled in a nimble pace on the way to Durstan Hall, as if she was determined to keep me in sight. I waved my hand to her. She stopped. A gipsy girl's figure is often as good an index to her mind as her face, and I perceived that she had not taken my greeting favourably; nor would she advance a step to my repeated beckonings; I tried hat, handkerchief, purse, in vain. My driver observed that she was taken with a fit of the obstinacy of "her lot." He shouted "Silver," and then "Fortune." She stood looking. The fellow discoursed on the nature of gipsies. Foxes were kept for hunting, he said; there was reason in that. Why we kept gipsies none could tell. He once backed a gipsy prize-fighter, who failed to keep his appointment. "Heart sunk too low below his belt, sir. You can't reckon on them for performances. And that same man afterwards fought the gamest fight in the chronicles o' the Ring! I knew he had it in him. But they're like nothing better than the weather; you can't put money on 'em and feel safe." Consequently he saw no good in them.

"She sticks to her post," he said, as we turned into

the Durstan grounds. The girl was like a flag-staff on the upper line of heathland.

Heriot had promised to meet me at the station. His hostess signified, in the inimitable running half-sentences of her sex and class when bent upon explaining something to make it equal to nothing, that she had not let him go because it was as well that he should not go, on account of the state of his arm, lest the horses should take fright, in which case, or any other, he would be totally helpless, and she, as his nurse, had exercised authority over her patient—one of the worst of patients —having reason to think it best to keep him under her eye. They were related, I learnt; subsequently I learnt that the match recently broken off was of Lady Maria's making. She just alluded to it under a French term. She came behind me in a newly-planted walk of evergreens, and called Heriot's name: I was very like him in figure, she said. Heriot was strolling, cigar in mouth, down one of the diminutive alleys of young fir in this upstart estate. He carried his right arm in a sling. I glanced at it once or twice: he affected to be prepossessed by the case between me and Edbury, and would say nothing of his own affairs, save that he meant to try for service in one of the Continental armies; he whose susceptible love for his country was almost a malady. But he had given himself to women: it was Cissy this, Trichy that, and the wiles of a Florence, the spites of an Agatha, duperies, innocent-seemings, witcheries, reptile-tricks of the fairest of women, all through

his conversation. He had so saturated himself with the resources, evasions, and desperate cruising of these light creatures of wind, tide, and tempest, that, like one who has been gazing on the whirligoround, he saw the whole of women running or only waiting for a suitable partner to run the giddy ring to perdition and an atoning pathos. He was still too young and healthy for more than a transient affectation of the cynical survey of their escapades. Pathos was imperiously called for at the close; it covered them over prettily, 'tucked them up,' as it were, for the final slumber: pathos was necessary, otherwise the ever-execrable husband appeared to triumph. Cissy is now the tall pale woman who is seen walking at a regular hour in the shade of the fashionable gardens, with a female attendant at her elbow and a strong man behind; she cannot pass a beggar. Isabella, still beautiful, nurses day and night her injured liege lord, the crusty incurable. That unvisited cottage by the Thames with the blinds down is the home of Georgina and the last child of her living three. To be just to him, Heriot brushed the pathos softly, and as if to escape from a sneer; but he could not have done well without it, for without it the tales of the ladies would have been rank fox-and-goose play, spider and fly; tales of rampant animalism decorated with jewellery and millinery and upholstery, and flavoured with idiotcy. Now I can listen to a story of a fool and a woman, even when a husband intervenes, so long as the passion, apart from circumstances, continues respectable; that is, true to

itself. Let the woman take herself off with her fool, and them make the best of it together; it is not impossible for them to do well, though it is hard. But I thank my training I behold the pair under no sentimental light when the husband is retained. I cut short one of Heriot's narratives by telling him that this picking bones of the dish was not to my taste. He twitted me with turning parson. The fretful feminine ocean incessantly tossing him had knocked the common sense out of him in whatsoever concerned women: he talked of me to Edbury shrewdly enough. I could not sit and listen to him when he hinted that Julia Bulsted might have made another man of him. We had no very amicable five minutes after Lady Maria's departure from the dessert. One's duty is to warn a friend when there is danger of a rising disgust, and I spoke out. I spoke of Kiomi, too. Heriot flushed, muttering, "The little devil!" with his usual contemplative relish of devilry. He did not open his mind to me, for he could only have done it by leading through sentimental inuendoes—the stuff he had taken to feed on. We parted, feeling that severe tension of the old links keeping us together which indicates the lack of new ones: a point where simple affection must bear the strain of friendship if it can. Heriot had promised to walk half-way with me to Bulsted, in spite of Lady Maria's childish fears of an attack on him. He was now satisfied with a good-by at the hall-doors, and he talked ostentatiously of a method he had to

bring Edbury up to the mark. I knew that same loud decreeing talk to be a method on his own behalf of concealing his sensitive resentment at the tone I had adopted, and I was comforted by the larger charity—so large that it embraced pitiful contempt—afforded to me by my insight. Lady Maria's carriage had gone to fetch her husband from a political dinner. My portmanteau advised me to wait for its return. Durstan and Riversley were at feud, however, owing to some powerful rude English used towards the proprietor of the former place by the squire; so I thought it better to let one of the grooms shoulder my luggage, and follow him. The night was dark; he chose the roadway, and I crossed the heath, meeting an exhilarating high wind that made my blood race. Egotism is not peculiar to any period of life; it is only especially curious in a young man beginning to match himself against his elders, for in him it suffuses the imagination; he is not merely selfishly sentient, or selfishly scheming: his very conceptions are selfish. I remember walking at my swiftest pace, blaming everybody I knew for insufficiency, for want of subordination to my interests, for poverty of nature, grossness, blindness to the fine lights shining in me; I blamed the fates for harassing me, circumstances for not surrounding me with friends worthy of me. Why had I not gone to one of our Universities, to have a wider choice of discriminating friends among the land's elect! I exacted as much compliance from men as from the earth I trod. The

central *I* resembled the sun of this universe, with the difference that it shrieked for nourishment, instead of dispensing it. My monstrous conceit of elevation will not suffer condensation into sentences. What I can testify to is, that for making you bless the legs you stand on, a knock-down blow is a specific. I had it before I knew that a hand was up. I should have fancied that I had run athwart a tree, but for the recollection, as I was reeling to the ground, of a hulk of a fellow suddenly fronting me, and he did not hesitate with his fist. I went over and over into a heathery hollow. The wind sang shrill through the furzes; nothing was visible but black clumps, black cloud. Astonished though I was, and rather shaken, it flashed through me that this was not the attack of a highwayman. He calls upon you to stand and deliver: it is a foe that hits without warning. The blow took me on the forehead, and might have been worse. Not seeing the enemy, curiosity was almost as strong in me as anger; but reflecting that I had injured no one I knew of, my nerves were quickly at the right pitch to retaliate. Brushing some spikes of furze off my hands, I prepared for it. A cry rose. My impressions seemed to be all backward, travelling up to me a moment or two behind time. I recognized a strange tongue in the cry, but too late that it was Romany to answer it. Instantly a voice was audible above the noisy wind:—"I spot him." Then began some good and fair fighting. I got my footing on grass, and liked the work. The fellow

facing me was unmistakably gipsy-build. I, too, had length of arm, and a disposition to use it by hitting straight out, with footing firm, instead of dodging and capering, which told in my favour, and is decidedly the best display of the noble art on a dark night. My dancer went over as neatly as I had preceded him; and therewith I considered enough was done for vengeance. The thrill of a salmon on the gut is known to give a savage satisfaction to our original nature; it is but an extension and attenuation of the hearty contentment springing from a thorough delivery of the fist upon the prominent features of an assailant that yields to it perforce. Even when you receive such perfect blows you are half satisfied. Feeling conqueror, my wrath was soothed; I bent to have a look at my ruffian, and ask him what cause of complaint gipsies camping on Durstan could find against Riversley. A sharp stroke on the side of my neck sent me across his body. He bit viciously. In pain and desperation I flew at another of the tawny devils. They multiplied. I took to my heels; but this was the vainest of stratagems—they beat me in nimbleness. Four of them were round me when I wheeled breathless to take my chance at fighting the odds. Fiery men have not much notion of chivalry: gipsies the least of all. They yelled disdain of my summons to them to come on one by one: "Now they had caught me, now they would pay me, now they would pound me;" and, standing at four corners, they commended me to think of becoming a jelly. Four

though they were, they kept their positions; they left it to me to rush in for a close; the hinder ones held out of arms' reach so long as I was disengaged. I had perpetually to shift my front, thinking—Oh, for a stick! any stout bit of timber! My fists ached, and a repetition of nasty dull knocks on back and neck, slogging thumps dealt by men getting to make sure of me, shattered my breathing. I cried out for a pause; I offered to take a couple of them at a time; I challenged three—the fourth to bide. I was now the dancer: left, right, and roundabout I had to swing, half-stunned, half-strangled with gorge. Those terrible blows in the back did the mischief. Sickness threatened to undermine me. Boxers know the severity of the flat-fisted stroke which a clever counterfeinting will sometimes fetch them in the unguarded bend of the back to win a rally with. Boxers have breathing-time: I had none. Stiff and sick, I tried to run; I tottered, I stood to be knocked down, I dropped like a log—careless of life. But I smelt earth keenly, and the damp grass and the devil's play of their feet on my chin, chest, and thighs, revived a fit of wrath enough to set me staggering on my legs again. They permitted it, for the purpose of battering me further. I passed from down to up mechanically, and enjoyed the chestful of air given me in the interval of rising; thought of Germany, and my father, and Janet at her window, complacently; raised a child's voice in my throat for mercy, quite inaudible, and accepted my punishment. One idea I had was, that I

could not possibly fail as a speaker after this—I wanted but a minute's grace to fetch breath for an oration, beginning, "You fools!" for I guessed that they had fallen upon the wrong man. Not a second was allowed. Soon the shrewd physical bracing, acting momentarily on my brain, relaxed; the fitful illumination ceased; all ideas faded out—clung about my beaten body—fled. The body might have been tossed into its grave, for aught I knew.

CHAPTER V.

AMONG GIPSY WOMEN.

I CANNOT say how long it was after my senses had gone when I began to grope for them on the warmest of heaving soft pillows, and lost the slight hold I had on them with the effort. Then came a series of climbings and fallings, risings to the surface and sinkings fathoms below. Any attempt to speculate pitched me back into darkness. Gifted with a pair of enormous eyes, which threw surrounding objects to a distance of a mile away, I could not induce the diminutive things to approach; and shutting eyes led to such a rolling of mountains in my brain, that, terrified by the gigantic revolution, I lay determinedly staring; clothed, it seemed positive, in a tight-fitting suit of sheet-lead; but why? I wondered why, and immediately received an extinguishing blow. My pillow was heavenly; I was constantly being cooled on it, and grew used to hear a croon no more musical than the unstopped reed above my head; a sound as of a breeze about a cavern's mouth, more soothing than a melody. Conjecture of my state, after hovering timidly

in dread of relapses, settled and assured me I was lying baked, half-buried in an old river-bed; moss at my cheek, my body inextricable; water now and then feebly striving to float me out, with horrid pain, with infinite refreshingness. A shady light, like the light through leafage, I could see; the water I felt. Why did it keep trying to move me? I questioned and sunk to the depths again.

The excruciated patient was having his wet bandages folded across his bruises, and could not bear a motion of the mind.

The mind's total solitude was the sign of recovering health. Kind nature put that district to sleep while she operated on the disquieted lower functions. I looked on my later self as one observes the mossy bearded substances travelling blind along the undercurrent of the stream, clinging to this and that, twirling absurdly.

Where was I? Not in a house. But for my condition of absolute calm, owing to skilful treatment, open air, and physical robustness, the scene would have been of a kind to scatter the busy little workmen setting up the fabric of my wits. A lighted oil-cup stood on a tripod in the middle of a tent-roof, and over it the creased neck and chin of a tall old woman, splendid in age, reddened vividly; her black eyes and grey brows, and greyish-black hair fell away in a dusk of their own. I thought her marvellous. Something she held in her hands that sent a thin steam between her and the light.

Outside, in the A cutting of the tent's threshold, a heavy-coloured sunset hung upon dark land. My pillow meantime lifted me gently at a regular measure, and it was with untroubled wonder that I came to the knowledge of a human heart beating within it. So soft could only be feminine; so firm still young. The bosom was Kiomi's. A girl sidled at the opening of the tent, peeping in, and from a muffled rattle of subpectoral thunder discharged at her in quick, heated snaps, I knew Kiomi's voice. After an altercation of their monotonous gipsy undertones, the girl dropped and crouched outside.

It was morning when I woke next, stronger, and aching worse. I was lying in the air, and she who served for nurse, pillow, parasol, and bank of herbage, had her arms round beneath mine cherishingly, all the fingers outspread and flat on me, just as they had been when I went to sleep.

"Kiomi!"

"Now, you be quiet."

"Can I stand up a minute or two?"

"No, and you won't talk."

I submitted. This was our duel all day: she slipped from me only twice, and when she did the girl took her place.

I began to think of Bulsted and Riversley.

"Kiomi, how long have I been here?"

"You'll be twice as long as you've been."

"A couple of days?"

"More like a dozen."

"Just tell me what happened."

"Ghm—m—m," she growled admonishingly.

Reflecting on it, I felt sure there must have been searching parties over the heath.

"Kiomi, I say, how was it they missed me?"

She struck at once on my thought.

"They're fools."

"How did you cheat them?"

"I didn't tie a handkercher across their eyes."

"You half smothered me once, in the combe."

"You go to sleep."

"Have you been doctor?"

The growling tiger "Ghm—m—m" constrained me to take it for a lullaby.

"Kiomi, why the deuce did your people attack me?"

She repeated the sound resembling that which sometimes issues from the vent of a mine; but I insisted upon her answering.

"I'll put you down and be off," she threatened.

"Brute of a girl! I hate you!"

"Hate away."

"Tell me who found me."

"I shan't. You shut your peepers."

The other and younger girl sung out: "I found you."

Kiomi sent a volley at her.

"I did," said the girl; "yes, and I nursed you

first, I did; and mother doctored you. Kiomi hasn't been here a day."

The old mother came out of the tent. She felt my pulse, and forthwith squatted in front of me. "You're hard to kill, and oily as a bean," said she. "You've only to lie quiet in the sun like a handsome gentleman; I'm sure you couldn't wish for more. Air and water's the doctor for such as you. You've got the bound in you to jump the ditch: don't you fret at it, or you'll lose your spring, my good gentleman."

"Leave off talking to me as a stranger," I bawled. "Out with it; why have you kept me here? Why did your men pitch into me?"

"*Our* men, my good gentleman!" the old woman ejaculated. There was innocence indeed! sufficient to pass the whole tribe before a bench of magistrates. She wheedled: "What have they against a handsome gentleman like you? They'd run for you fifty mile a day, and show you all their tricks and secrets for nothing."

My despot, Kiomi, fired invectives at her mother. The old mother retorted; the girl joined in. All three were scowling, flashing, showing teeth, driving the wordy javelin upon one another, indiscriminately, or two to one, without a pause; all to a sound like the slack silver string of the fiddle.

I sung out truce to them; they racked me with laughter; and such laughter!—the shaking of husks in a half-empty sack.

Ultimately, on a sudden cessation of the storm of tongues, they agreed that I must have my broth.

Sheer weariness, seasoned with some hope that the broth would give me strength to mount on my legs and walk, persuaded me to drink it. Still the old mother declared that none of her men would ever have laid hands on me. Why should they? she asked. What had I done to them? Was it their way?

Kiomi's arms tightened over my breast. The involuntary pressure was like an illumination to me.

No longer asking for the grounds of the attack on a mistaken person, and bowing to the fiction that none of the tribe had been among my assailants, I obtained information. The girl, Eveleen, had spied me entering Durstan. Quite by chance, she was concealed near Bulsted Park gates when the groom arrived and told the lodge-keeper that Mr. Harry Richmond was coming up over the heath, and might have lost his way. "Richmond!" the girl threw a world of meaning into the unexpected name. Kiomi clutched me to her bosom, but no one breathed the name we had in our thoughts. Eveleen and the old mother had searched for me upon the heath, and having haled me head and foot to their tent, despatched a message to bring Kiomi down from London to aid them in their desperate shift. They knew Squire Beltham's temper. He would have scattered the tribe to the shores of the kingdom at a rumour of foul play to his grandson. Kiomi came in time to smuggle me through an inspection of the tent

and cross-examination of its ostensible denizens by Captain Bulsted, who had no suspicions, though he was in a state of wonderment. Hearing all this, I was the first to say it would be better I should get out of the neighbourhood as soon as my legs should support me. The grin that goes for a laugh among gipsies followed my question of how Kiomi had managed to smuggle me. Eveleen was my informant when the dreaded Kiomi happened to be off duty for a minute. By a hasty transformation, due to a nightcap on the bandages about the head, and an old petticoat over my feet, Captain William's insensible friend was introduced to him as the sore sick great-grandmother of the tribe, mother of Kiomi's mother, aged ninety-one. The captain paid like a man for doctor and burial fees; he undertook, also, to send the old lady a pound of snuff to assist her to a last sneeze or two on the right side of the grave, and he kept his word; for, deeming it necessary to paint her in a characteristic, these prodigious serpents told him gravely that she delighted in snuff; it was almost the only thing that kept her alive, barring a sip of broth. Captain William's comment on the interesting piece of longevity whose well-covered length and framework lay exposed to his respectful contemplation, was, that she must have been a devilish find old lady in her day. "Six foot" was given as her measurement. One pound of snuff, a bottle of rum, and five sovereigns, were the fruits of the captain's sensibility. I shattered my ribs with laughter over

the story. Eveleen dwelt on the triumph, twinkling. Kiomi despised laughter or triumph resulting from the natural exercise of craft on an emergency. "But my handsome gentleman he won't tell on us, will he, when we've nursed him, and doctored him, and made him one of us, and as good a stick o' timber as grows in the forest?" whined the old mother. I had to swear I would not. "He!" cried Kiomi. "He may forget us when he's gone," the mother said. She would have liked me to kiss a book to seal the oath. Anxiety about the safety of their 'homes,' that is, the assurance of an untroubled reception upon their customary camping-grounds, is a peculiarity of the gipsies, distinguishing them, equally with their cleanliness and thriftiness, from mumpers and the common wanderers. It is their tribute to civilization, which generally keeps them within the laws. Who that does not know them will believe that under their domestic system I had the best broth and the best tea I have ever tasted! They are very cunning brewers and sagacious buyers too; their maxims show them to direct all their acuteness upon obtaining quality for their money. A compliment not backed by silver is hardly intelligible to the pretty ones: money is a really credible thing to them; and when they have it, they know how to use it. Apparently because they know so well, so perfectly appreciating it, they have only vague ideas of a corresponding sentiment on the opposite side to the bargain, and imagine that they fool people much more often than

they succeed in doing. Once duped themselves, they are the wariest of the dog-burnt; the place is notched where it occurred, and for ever avoided. On the other hand, they repose implicit faith in a reputation vouched for by their experience. I was amused by the girl Eveleen's dotting of houses over the breadth of five counties, where for this and that article of apparel she designed to expend portions of a golden guinea, confident that she would get the very best, and a shilling besides. The unwonted coin gave her the joy of supposing she cheated the Mint of that sum. This guinea was a present to the girl (to whom I owed my thrashing, by the way) that excused itself under cover of being a bribe for sight of a mirror interdicted by the implacable Kiomi. I wanted to have a look at my face. Now that the familiar scenes were beginning to wear their original features to me, my dread of personal hideousness was distressing, though Eveleen declared the bad blood in my cheeks and eyes "had been sucked by pounds of red meat." I wondered whether, if I stood up and walked to either one of the three great halls lying in an obtuse triangle within view, I should easily be recognized. When I did see myself, I groaned verily. With the silence of profound resignation, I handed back to Eveleen the curious fragment of her boudoir, which would have grimaced at Helen of Troy.

"You're feeling your nose—you've been looking at a glass!" Kiomi said, with supernatural swiftness of deduction on her return.

She added for my comfort that nothing was broken, but confessed me to be still "a sight;" and thereupon drove knotty language at Eveleen. The girl retorted, and though these two would never acknowledge to me that any of their men had been in this neighbourhood recently, the fact was treated as a matter of course in their spiteful altercation, and each saddled the other with the mistake they had committed. Eveleen snatched the last word. What she said I did not comprehend, she must have hit hard. Kiomi's eyes lightened and her lips twitched; she coloured like the roofing smoke of the tent-fire; twice she showed her teeth, as in a spasm, struck to the heart, unable to speak, breathing in and out of a bitterly disjoined mouth. Eveleen ran. I guessed at the ill-word spoken. Kiomi sat eyeing the wood-ashes, a devouring gaze that shot straight and read but one thing. They who have seen wild creatures die will have her before them, saving the fiery eyes. She became an ashen-colour. I took her little hand. Unconscious of me, her brown fingers clutching at mine, she flung up her nostrils, craving air.

This was the picture of the woman who could not weep in her misery.

"Kiomi, old friend!" I called to her. I could have cursed that other friend, the son of mischief; for she, I could have sworn, had been fiercely and wantonly hunted. Chastity of nature, intense personal pride, were as proper to her as the free winds are to the heaths; they were as visible to dull divination as the milky blue about

the iris of her eyeballs. She had actually no animal vileness, animal though she might be termed, and would have appeared if compared with Heriot's admirable Cissies and Gwennies, and other ladies of the Graces that run to fall, and spend their pains more in kindling the scent of the huntsman than in effectively flying.

There was no consolation for her. I thought of the old ballad of the slain knight and the corbies, when

"Down there came a fallow doe . . ."

She was nothing to me, and as little romantic a creature as could be, but her state was that of 'such a leman' whom every gentleman in evil case might pray for to cherish him: and she had nursed me on her bosom. I said the best I could think of. I doubt if she heard me.

The girl Eveleen came in sight, loitering and looking, kicking her idle heels.

Kiomi turned sharp round to me.

"I'm going. Your father's here, up at Bulsted. I'll see him. He won't tell. He'll come soon. You'll be fit to walk in a day. You're sound as a nail. Good-by —I shan't say good-by twice," she answered my attempt to keep her, and passed into the tent, out of which she brought a small bundle tied in a yellow handkerchief, and walked away without nodding or speaking.

"What was that you said to Kiomi?" I questioned Eveleen, who was quickly beside me.

She replied, accurately or not: "I told her our

men 'd give her as good as she gave me, let her wait and see."

To some chiding on my part, she rejoined: "Shall I take a slap in the face from one of mine because she's an aunt, and can't show herself all for walking off the line?" Therewith she pouted; or, to sketch her with precision, 'snouted' would better convey the vivacity of her ugly flash of features. It was an error in me to think her heartless. She talked of her aunt Kiomi affectionately for a gipsy girl, whose modulated tones are all addressed to the soft public; letting me at the same time understand that she thought their men right in making the tents uninhabitable to a rye guilty of spoiling the blood. Nevertheless it is the delicacy of the slipped woman which condemns her to be an outcast. Her women will receive her, though she often has to smart for it, as Eveleen worked on poor Kiomi's sensitiveness: and I fancy the men would come round by degrees, though they should smite and wither her at first. Eveleen spoke with the pride of bated breath of the ferocious unforgivingness of their men. Perhaps if she had known that I had traced the good repute of the tribes for purity to the sweeter instincts of the women, she would have eulogized her sex to amuse me. Gipsy girls, like other people, are fond of showing off; but it would have been a victory of education to have helped her to feel the distinction of the feminine sense of shame half as awfully and warmly as she did the inscrutable iron despotism of the males. She hinted that the

mistake of which I had been the victim would be rectified.

"Tell your men I'll hunt them down like rats if I hear of it," said I.

While we were conversing my father arrived. Eveleen, not knowing him, would have had me accept the friendly covering of a mat.

"Here's a big one! he's a clergyman," she muttered to herself, and ran to him and set up a gipsy whine, fronting me up to the last step while she advanced; she only yielded ground to my outcry.

My father bent over me. Kiomi had prepared him for what he saw. I quieted his alarm by talking currently and easily. Julia Bulsted had despatched a messenger to inform him of my mysterious disappearance; but he, as his way was, revelling in large conjectures, had half imagined me seized by a gust of passion, and bound for Germany. "Without my luggage?" I laughed.

"Ay, without your luggage, Richie," he answered seriously. His conceit of a better knowledge of me than others possessed, had buoyed him up. "For I knew," he said, "we two do nothing like the herd of men. I thought you were off to her, my boy. Now!" he looked at me, and this look of dismay was a perfect mirror. I was not a presentable object.

He stretched his limbs on the heather and kept hold of my hand, looking and talking watchfully, doctor-like, doubting me to be as sound in body as I assured him I was, despite aches and pains. Eveleen hung near.

"These people have been kind to you?" he said.

"No, the biggest brutes on the earth," said I.

"Oh! you say that, when I spotted you out in the dark where you might have lied to be eaten, and carried you and washed your bloody face, and watched you, and never slept, I didn't, to mother you and wet your head!" cried the girl.

My father beckoned to her and thanked her appreciably in the yellow tongue.

"So these scoundrels of the high-road fell upon you and robbed you, Richie?"

I nodded.

"You let him think they robbed you, and you had your purse to give me a gold guinea out of it!" Eveleen cried, and finding herself in the wrong track, volubly resumed: "That they didn't, for they hadn't time, whether they meant to, and the night black as a coal, whoever they were."

The mystery of my not having sent word to Bulsted or to Riversley perplexed my father.

"Comfortable here!" he echoed me, disconsolately, and glanced at the heath, the tent, the black circle of the broth-pot, and the wild girl.

CHAPTER VI.

MY FATHER ACTS THE CHARMER AGAIN.

KIOMI'S mother was seen in a turn of the gravel-cutting, bearing purchases from Durstan village. She took the new circumstances in with a single cast up of her wary eyelids; and her, and her skill in surgery and art in medicine, I praised to lull her fears, which procured me the denomination of old friend, as well as handsome gentleman; she went so far as to add, in a fit of natural warmth, nice fellow; and it is the truth that this term effected wonders in flattering me: it seemed to reveal to me how simple it was for Harry Richmond, one whom gipsies could think a nice fellow, to be the lord of Janet's affections—to be her husband. My heart throbbed; yet she was within range of a mile and a half, and I did not wish to be taken to her. I did wish to smell the piney air about the lake-palace; but the thought of Ottilia caused me no quick pulsations.

My father remained an hour. He could not perceive the drift of my objection to go either to Bulsted or to Riversley, and desire that my misadventure should be

unknown at those places. However, he obeyed me, as I could always trust him to do scrupulously, and told a tale at Bulsted. In the afternoon he returned in a carriage to convey me to the seaside. When I was raised I fainted, and saw the last of the camp on Durstan much as I had come to it first. Sickness and swimming of the head continued for several days. I was persecuted with the sensation of the carriage journey, and an iteration of my father's that ran: "My son's inanimate body in my arms," or "Clasping the lifeless body of my sole son, Harry Richmond," and other variations. I said nothing about it. He told me aghast that I had spat blood. A battery of eight fists, having it in the end all its own way, leaves a deeper indentation on its target than a pistol-shot that passes free of the vital chords. My convalescence in Germany was a melody compared with this. I ought to have stopped in the tent, according to the wise old mother's advice, given sincerely, for prudence counselled her to strike her canvas and be gone. There I should have lain, interested in the progress of a bee, the course of a beetle or a cloud, a spider's business, and the shaking of the gorse and the heather, until good health had grown out of thoughtlessness. The very sight of my father was as a hive of humming troubles. His intense anxiety about me reflected in my mind the endless worry I had concerning him. It was the intellect which condemned him when he wore a joyful air, and the sensations when he waxed over-solicitous. Whether or not the

sentences were just the judges should have sometimes shifted places. I was unable to divine why he fevered me so much. Must I say it?—He had ceased to entertain me. Instead of a comic I found him a tragic spectacle; and his exuberant anticipations, his bursting hopes that fed their forcing-bed with the blight and decay of their predecessors, his transient fits of despair after a touch at my pulses, and exclamation of "Oh, Richie, Richie, if only I had my boy up and well!"—assuming that nothing but my tardy recovery stood in the way of our contentment—were examples of downright unreason such as contemplation through the comic glass would have excused; the tragic could not. I knew, nevertheless, that to the rest of the world he was a progressive comedy; and the knowledge made him seem more tragic still. He clearly could not learn from misfortune; he was not to be contained. Money I gave him freely, holding the money at my disposal his own; I chafed at his unteachable spirit, surely one of the most tragical things in life; and the proof of my love for him was that I thought it so, though I should have been kinder had he amused me, as in the old days. Conceive to yourself the keeping watch over a fountain choked in its spouting, incessantly labouring to spirt a jet into the air; now for a moment glittering and towering in a column, and once more straining to mount. My father appeared to me in that and other images. He would have had me believe him shooting to his zenith, victorious at last. I likewise was to reap a victory of

the highest kind from the attack of the mysterious ruffians; so much, he said, he thought he could assure me of. He chattered of an intimidated Government, and Dettermain and Newson; duchesses, dukes, most friendly; innumerable invitations to country castles; and among other things one which really showed him to be capable of conceiving ideas and working from an initiative. But this, too, though it accomplished a temporary service, he rendered illusory to me by his unhappy manner of regarding it as an instance of his now permanent social authority. He had instituted what he called his JURY OF HONOUR COURT, composed of the select gentlemen of the realm, ostensibly to weigh the causes of disputes between members of their class, and decree the method of settlement: but actually, my father admitted, to put a stop to the affair between Edbury and me. "That was the origin of the notion, Richie. I carried it on. I dined some of the best men of our day. I seized the opportunity when our choicest emperor was rolling on wheels to propound my system. I mention the names of Bramham DeWitt, Colonel Hibbert Segrave, Lord Alonzo Carr, Admiral Loftus, the Earl of Luton, the Marquis of Hatchford, Jack Hippony, Monterez Williams,—I think you know him? —and little Dick Phillimore, son of a big-wig, a fellow of a capital wit and discretion; I mention them as present to convince you we were not triflers, dear boy. My argument ran, it is absurd to fight; also it is intolerable to be compelled to submit to insult. As the

case stands, we are under a summary edict of the citizens, to whom chivalry is unknown. Well, well, I delivered a short speech. Fighting, I said, resembled butting,—a performance proper to creatures that grow horns instead of brains . . . not to allude to a multitude of telling remarks; and the question 'Is man a fighting animal?' my answer being that he is not born with spurs on his heels or horns to his head: and that those who insisted on fighting should be examined by competent anatomists, 'ologists' of some sort, to decide whether they have the excrescences, and proclaim them . . . touching on these lighter parts of my theme with extreme delicacy. But—and here I dwelt on my point: Man, if not a fighting animal in his glorious—I forget what—is a sensitive one, and has the idea of honour. 'Hear,' from Colonel Segrave, and Sir Weeton Slater—he was one of the party. In fine, Richie, I found myself wafted into a breathing oration. I cannot, I confess it humbly, hear your 'hear, hear,' without going up and off, inflated like a balloon. 'Shall the arbitration of the magistracy, indemnifications in money awarded by the law-courts, succeed in satisfying,'—but I declare to you, Richie, it was no platform speech. I know your term—'the chain-cable sentence.' Nothing of the kind, I assure you. Plain sense, as from gentlemen to gentlemen. We require, I said, a protection that the polite world of Great Britain does not now afford us against the aggressions of the knave, the fool, and the brute. We establish a Court. We do hereby

—no, no, not the 'hereby;' quite simply, Richie—pledge ourselves—I said some other word, not 'pledge' to use our utmost authority and influence to exclude from our circles persons refusing to make the reparation of an apology for wanton common insults: we renounce intercourse with men declining, when guilty of provoking the sentiment of hostility, to submit to the jurisdiction of our Court. All I want you to see is the notion. We raise the shield against the cowardly bully which the laws have raised against the bloody one. 'And gentlemen,'" my father resumed his oration, forgetting my sober eye for a minute—"'Gentlemen, we are the ultimate Court of Appeal for men who cherish their honour, yet abstain from fastening it like a millstone round the neck of their common-sense.' Credit me, Richie, the proposition kindled. We cited Lord Edbury to appear before us, and I tell you we extracted an ample apology to you from that young nobleman. And let me add, one that I, that we, must impose it upon an old son to accept. He does! Come, come. And you shall see, Richie, society shall never repose an inert mass under my leadership. I cure it; I shake it and cure it."

He promenaded the room, repeating: "I do not say I am possessed of a panacea," and bending to my chin as he passed; "I maintain that I can and do fulfil the duties of my station, which is my element, attained in the teeth of considerable difficulties, as no other man could, be he prince or premier minister. Not one," he flourished, stepping onward. "And mind you, Richie,

this," he swung round, conscious as ever of the critic in me, though witless to correct his pomp of style, "this is not self-glorification. I point you facts. I have a thousand schemes—projects. I recognize the value of early misfortune. The particular misfortune of princes born is that they know nothing of the world—babies! I grant you, babies. Now I do. I have it on my thumb-nail. I know its wants. And just as I succeeded in making you a member of our Parliament in assembly, and the husband of an hereditary princess—hear me—so will I make good my original determination to be in myself the fountain of our social laws, and leader. I have never, I believe—to speak conscientiously—failed in a thing I have once determined on."

The single wish that I might be a boy again, to find pleasure in his talk, was all that remained to combat the distaste I had for such oppressive deliveries of a mind apparently as little capable of being seated as a bladder charged with gas. I thanked him for getting rid of Edbury, and a touch of remorse pricked me, it is true, on his turning abruptly and saying: "You see me in my nakedness, Richie. To you and my valet, the heart, the body!" He was too sympathetic not to have a keen apprehension of a state of hostility in one whom he loved. If I had inclined to melt, however, his next remark would have been enough to harden me: "I have fought as many battles, and gained as startling victories as Napoleon Bonaparte; *he* was an upstart." The word gave me a jerk.

Sometimes he would indulge me transparently in a political controversy, confessing that my dialectical dexterity went far to make a Radical of him. I had no other amusement, or I should have held my peace. I tried every argument I could think of to prove to him that there was neither honour, nor dignity, nor profit in aiming at titular distinctions not forced upon us by the circumstances of our birth. He kept his position with much sly fencing, approaching shrewdness; and, whatever I might say, I could not deny that a vile old knock-knee'd world, tugging its forelock to the look of rank and chink of wealth, backed him, if he chose to be insensible to radical dignity. "In my time," said he, "all young gentlemen were born Tories. The doctor no more expected to see a Radical come into the world from a good family than a radish. But I discern you, my dear boy. Our reigning Families must now be active; they require the discipline I have undergone; and I, also, dine at aldermen's tables, and lay a foundation-stone—as Jorian says—with the facility of a hen-mother: *that* should not suffice them. 'Tis not sufficient for me. I lay my stone, eat my dinner, make my complimentary speech—and that is all that is expected of us; but I am fully aware we should do more. We must lead, or we are lost. Ay, and—to quote you—a Lord Mayor's barge is a pretty piece of gilt for the festive and luxurious to run up the river Thames in and mark their swans. I am convinced there is something deep in that. But what am I to do? Would you have

me frown upon the people? Richie, it is prudent—I maintain it righteous, nay, it is, I affirm positively, sovereign wisdom — to cultivate every flower in the British bosom. Riposte me—have you too many? Say yes, and you pass my guard. You cannot. I fence you there. This British loyalty is, in my estimation, absolutely beautiful. We grow to a head in our old England. The people have an eye! I need no introduction to them. We reciprocate a highly cordial feeling when they line the streets and roads with respectful salutations, and I acknowledge their demonstrative good-will. These things make us a nation. By heaven, Richie, you are, on this occasion, if your dad may tell you so, wrong. I ask pardon for my bluntness; but I put it to you, could we, not travelling as personages in our well-beloved country, count on civility to greet us everywhere? Assuredly not. My position is, that by consenting to their honest enthusiasm, we—the identical effect you are perpetually crying out for—we civilize them, we civilize them. Goodness!—a Great Britain without Royalty!"

He launched on a series of desolate images. In the end, I was almost persuaded that he had an idea in his anxiety to cultivate the primary British sentiment.

We moved from town to town along the south coast; but it was vain to hope we might be taken for simple people. Nor was he altogether to blame, except in allowing the national instinct for "worship and reverence" to air itself unrebuked. I fled to the island.

Temple ran down to meet me there, and I heard that Janet had written to him for news of me. He entered our hotel a private person; when he passed out, hats flew off before him. The modest little fellow went along a double line of attentive observers on the pier, and came back, asking me in astonishment who he was supposed to be.

"I petitioned for privacy here!" exclaimed my father. It accounted for the mystery.

Temple knew my feelings, and did but glance at me.

Close upon Temple's arrival we had a strange couple of visitors. "Mistress Dolly Disher and her husband," my father introduced them. She called him by one of his Christian names inadvertently at times. The husband was a confectioner, a satisfied shade of a man, who reserved the exercise of his will for his business, we learnt; she, a bustling, fresh-faced woman of forty-five, with still expressive dark eyes, and, I guessed, the ideal remainder of a passion in her bosom. The guess was no great hazard. She was soon sitting beside me, telling me of the "years" she had known my father, and of the most affectionate friend and perfect gentleman he was: of the ladies who had been in love with him; "no wonder:" and of his sorrows and struggles, and his beautiful voice, and hearts that bled for him; and of one at least who prayed and trusted he would be successful at last. Temple and the pallid confectioner spent the day on board a yacht with my father. Mrs. Dolly stayed to nurse me and persuade me to swallow

medicine. She talked of her youth, when, as a fashionable bootmaker's daughter, she permitted no bills to be sent in to Mr. Richmond, alleging, as a sufficient reason for it to her father, that their family came from Richmond in Yorkshire. Eventually, the bills were always paid. She had not been able to manage her husband so well; and the consequence was that (she breathed low) an execution was out; "though I tell him," she said tremulously, "he's sure to be paid in the long run, if only he'll wait. But no; he is you cannot think how obstinate in his business. And my girl Augusta waiting for Mr. Roy Richmond, the wish of our hearts! to assist at her wedding; and can we ask it, and have an execution hanging over him? And for all my husband's a guest here, he's as likely as not to set the officers at work, do what I will, to-morrow or any day. Your father invited us, Mr. Harry. I forced my husband to come, hoping against hope; for your papa gave the orders, relying on me, as he believed he might, and my husband undertook them, all through me. There it stops; he hears reports, and he takes fright: in goes the bill; then it's law, and last— Oh! I'm ashamed."

Mr. Disher's bill was for supplying suppers to the Balls. He received my cheque for the amount in full, observing that he had been confident his wife was correct when she said it would be paid, but a tradesman's business was to hasten the day of payment; and, for a penance, he himself would pacify the lawyers.

On hearing of the settlement of Mr. Disher's claim,

my father ahem'd, speechless, which was a sign of his swallowing vexation. He remarked that I had, no doubt with the best intentions, encroached on his liberty. "I do not like to have my debts disturbed." He put it to me whether a man, carrying out a life-long plan, would not be disconcerted by the friendliest intervention. This payment to Disher he pronounced fatal in policy. "You have struck a heavy blow to my credit, Richie. Good little Mistress Dolly brought the man down here —no select addition to our society—and we were doing our utmost to endure him, as the ladies say, for the very purpose . . . but the error stands committed! For the future, friend Disher will infallibly expect payments within the year. Credit for suppers is the guarantee of unlimited entertainments. And I was inspiring him with absolute confidence for next year's campaign. Money, you are aware, is no longer a question to terrify me. I hold proofs that I have conclusively frightened Government, and you know it. But this regards the manipulation of the man Disher. He will now dictate to me. A refresher of a few hundreds would have been impolitic to this kind of man; but the entire sum! and to a creditor in arms! You reverse the proper situations of gentleman and tradesman. My supper-man, in particular, should be taught to understand that he is bound up in my success. Something frightened him; he proceeded at law: and now we have shown him that he has frightened us. An execution? My dear boy, I have danced an execution five years

running, and ordered, consecutively, at the same house. Like other matters, an execution depends upon how you treat it. The odds are that we have mortally offended Mistress Dolly." He apologized for dwelling on the subject, with the plea that it was an essential part of his machinery of action, and the usual comparison of "the sagacious general" whose forethought omitted no minutiæ. I had to listen.

The lady professed to be hurt. The payment, however, put an end to the visit of this couple. Politic or not, it was a large sum to disburse, and once more my attention became fixed on the probable display of figures in my banker's book. Bonds and bills were falling due: the current expenses were exhausting. I tried to face the evil, and take a line of conduct, staggering, as I did on my feet. Had I been well enough, I believe I should have gone to my grandfather, to throw myself on his good-nature; such was the brain's wise counsel: but I was all nerves and alarms, insomuch that I interdicted Temple's writing to Janet, lest it should bring on me letters from my aunt Dorothy, full of advice that could no longer be followed, well-meant cautions that might as well be addressed to the mile-posts behind me. Moreover, Janet would be flying on the wind to me, and I had a craving for soft arms and the look of her eyebrows that warned me to keep her off if I intended to act as became a man of good faith.

Fair weather, sunny green sea-water speckled with yachts shooting and bounding, and sending me the

sharp sense of life there is in dashed-up fountains of silvery salt-spray, would have quickened my blood sooner but for this hot-bed of fruitless adventure, tricksy precepts, and wisdom turned imp, in which my father had again planted me. To pity him seemed a childish affectation. His praise of my good looks pleased me, for on that point he was fitted to be a judge, and I was still fancying I had lost them on the heath. Troops of the satellites of his grand parade surrounded him. I saw him walk down the pier like one breaking up a levee. At times he appeared to me a commanding phantasm in the midst of phantasm figures of great ladies and their lords, whose names he told off on his return like a drover counting his herd; but within range of his eye and voice the reality of him grew overpowering. It seduced me, and, despite reason, I began to feel warm under his compliments. He was like wine. Gaiety sprang under his feet. Sitting at my window, I thirsted to see him when he was out of sight, and had touches of the passion of my boyhood. I listened credulously, too, as in the old days, when he repeated, "You will find I am a magician, and very soon, Richie, mark me." His manner hinted that there was a surprise in store. "You have not been on the brink of the grave for nothing." He resembled wine in the other conditions attached to its rare qualities. Oh for the choice of having only a little of him, instead of having him on my heart! The unfilial wish attacked me frequently: he could be, and was, so

ravishing to strangers and light acquaintances. Did by chance a likeness exist between us? My sick fancy rushed to the Belthams for a denial. There did, of some sort, I knew; and the thought partitioned my dreamy ideas, of which the noblest, taking advantage of my physical weakness, compelled me to confess that it was a vain delusion for one such as I to hope for Ottilia. This looking at the roots of yourself, if you are possessed of a nobler half that will do it, is a sound corrective of an excessive ambition. Unfortunately it would seem that young men can do it only in sickness. With the use of my legs, and open-air breathing, I became compact, and as hungry and zealous on behalf of my individuality, as proud of it, as I had ever been; prouder and hungrier.

My first day of outing, when, looking at every face, I could reflect on the miraculous issue of mine almost clear from its pummelling, and above all, that my nose was safe—not stamped with the pugilist's brand—inspired a lyrical ebullition of gratitude. Who so intoxicated as the convalescent catching at health?

I met Charles Etherell on the pier, and heard that my parliamentary seat was considered in peril, together with a deal of gossip about my disappearance.

My father, who was growing markedly restless, on the watch for letters and new arrivals, started to pay Chippenden a flying visit. He begged me urgently to remain for another few days, while he gathered information, saying my presence at his chief quarters

did him infinite service, and I always thought that possible. I should find he was a magician, he repeated, with a sort of hesitating fervour.

I had just waved my hand to him as the boat was bearing him away from the pier-head, when a feminine voice murmured in my ear, "Is not this our third meeting, Mr. Harry Richmond?—Venice, Elbestadt, and the Isle of Wight!" She ran on, allowing me time to recognize Clara Goodwin, "What was your last adventure? You have been ill. *Very* ill? Has it been serious?"

I made light of it. "No; a tumble."

"You look pale," she said, quickly.

"That's from grieving at the loss of my beauty, Miss Goodwin."

"Have you really not been seriously ill?" she asked with an astonishing eagerness.

I told her mock-loftily that I did not believe in serious illnesses coming to godlike youth, and plied her in turn with inquiries.

"You have not been laid up in bed?" she persisted.

"No, on my honour, not in bed."

"Then," said she, "I would give much to be able to stop that boat."

She amazed me. "Why?"

"Because it's going on a bad errand," she replied.

"Miss Goodwin, you perplex me. My father has started in that boat."

"Yes, I saw him." She glanced hastily at the

foam, in a way to show indifference. "What I am saying concerns others . . . who have heard you were dangerously ill. I have sent for them to hasten across."

"My aunt and Miss Ilchester?"

"No."

"Who are they? Miss Goodwin, I'll answer any question. I've been queerish, that's true. Now let me hear who they are, when you arrived, when you expect them. Where are they now?"

"As to me," she responded with what stretched on my ears like an insufferable drawl, "I came over last night to hire a furnished house or lodgings. Papa has an appointment attached to the fortifications yonder. We'll leave the pier, if you please. You draw too much attention on ladies who venture to claim acquaintance with so important a gentleman."

We walked the whole length of the pier, chatting of our former meetings.

"Not here," she said, as soon as I began to question.

I was led further on, half expecting that the accessories of time and place would have to do with the revelation.

The bitter creature drew me at her heels into a linendraper's shop. There she took a seat, pitched her voice to the key of a lady's at a dinner-table, when speaking to her cavalier of the history or attire of some one present, and said, "You are sure the illness was not at all feigned?"

She had me as completely at her mercy in this detestable shop as if I were fixed in a witness-box.

"Feigned!" I exclaimed.

"That is no answer. And pray remember where you are."

"No, the illness was not feigned."

"And you have not made the most of it?"

"What an extraordinary thing to say!"

"That is no answer. And please do not imagine yourself under the necessity of acting every sentiment of your heart before these people."

She favoured a shopman with half-a-dozen directions.

"My answer is, then, that I have *not* made the most of it," I said.

"Not even by proxy?"

"Once more I'm adrift."

"You are certainly energetic. I must address you as a brother, or it will be supposed we are quarrelling. Harry, do you like that pattern?"

"Yes. What's the meaning of proxy?"

"With the accent you give it, Heaven only knows what it means. I would rather you did not talk here like a Frenchman relating his last love-affair in company. *Must* your voice escape control exactly at the indicatory words? Do you think your father made the most of it?"

"Of my illness? Oh! yes; the utmost. I should undoubtedly think so. That's his way."

"Why did you permit it?"

"I was what they call 'wandering' half the time. Besides, who could keep him in check? I rarely know what he is doing."

"You don't know what he wrote?"

"Wrote?"

"That you were dying."

"Of me? To whom?"

She scrutinized me, and rose from her chair. "I must try some other shop. How is it that, if these English people cannot make a 'berthe' fit to wear, they do not conceive the idea of importing such things from Paris? I will take your arm, Harry."

"You have bought nothing," I remarked.

"I have as much as I went for," she replied, and gravely thanked the assistant leaning on his thumbs across the counter; after which, dropping the graceless play of an enigma, she inquired whether I had forgotten the Frau von Dittmarsch.

I had, utterly; but not her maiden name of Sibley.

"Miss Goodwin, is she one of those who are coming to the island?"

"Frau von Dittmarsch? Yes. She takes an interest in you. She and I have been in correspondence ever since my visit to Sarkeld. It reminds me, you may vary my maiden name with the Christian, if you like. Harry, I believe you are truthful as ever, in spite——"

"Don't be unjust," said I.

"I wish I could think I was!" she rejoined. "Frau von Dittmarsch was at Sarkeld, and received terrible

news of you. She called on me, at my father's residence over the water yonder, yesterday afternoon, desiring greatly to know—she is as cautious as one with a jewel in her custody—how it fared with you, whether you were actually in a dying state. I came here to learn; I have friends here: you were not alone, or I should have called on you. The rumour was that you were very ill; so I hired a furnished place for Frau von Dittmarsch at once. But when I saw you and him together, and the parting between you, I began to have fears; I should have countermanded the despatch I sent by the boat had it been possible."

"It has gone! And tell me the name of the other."

"Frau von Dittmarsch has a husband."

"Not with her now. Oh! cruel! speak: her name?"

"Her name, Harry? Her title is Countess von Delzenburg."

"Not princess?"

"Not in England."

Then Ottilia was here!

My father was indeed a magician!

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRINCESS ENTRAPPED.

"Not princess in England" could betoken but one thing—an incredible act of devotion, so great that it stunned my senses, and I thought of it, and of all it involved, before the vision of Ottilia crossing seas took possession of me."

"The Princess Ottilia, Miss Goodwin?"

"The Countess of Delzenburg, Harry."

"To see me? She has come!"

"Harry, you talk like the boy you were when we met before you knew her. Yes and yes to everything you have to say, but I think you should spare her name."

"She comes thinking me ill?"

"Dying."

"I'm as strong as ever I was."

"I should imagine you are, only rather pale."

"Have you, tell me, Clara, seen her yourself? Is she well?"

"Pale: not unwell: anxious."

"About me?"

"It may be about the political affairs of the Continent; they are disturbed."

"She spoke of me?"

"Yes."

"She is coming by the next boat?"

"It's my fear that she is."

"Why do you fear?"

"Shall I answer you, Harry? It is useless now. Well, because she has been deceived. That is why. You will soon find it out."

"Prince Ernest is at Sarkeld?"

"In Paris, I hear."

"How will your despatch reach these ladies in time for them to come over by the next boat?"

"I have sent my father's servant. The General—he is promoted at last, Harry—attends the ladies in person, and is now waiting for the boat's arrival over there, to follow my directions."

"You won't leave me?"

Miss Goodwin had promised to meet the foreign ladies on the pier. We quarrelled and made it up a dozen times like girl and boy, I calling her aunt Clara, as in the old days, and she calling me occasionally son Richie: an imitation of my father's manner of speech to me when we formed acquaintance first in Venice. But I was very little aware of what I was saying or doing. The forces of my life were yoked to the heart, and tumbled as confusedly as the world under Phaëthon

charioteer. We walked on the heights above the town. I looked over the water to the white line of shore and batteries where this wonder stood, who was what poets dream of, deep-hearted men hope for, none quite believe in. Hardly could I; and though my relenting spinster friend at my elbow kept assuring me it was true that she was there, my sceptical sight fixed on the stale prominences visible in the same features which they had worn day after empty day of late. This deed of hers was an act of devotion great as death. I knew it from experience consonant to Ottilia's character; but could a princess, hereditary, and bound in the league of governing princes, dare so to brave her condition? Complex of mind, simplest in character, the uncontrollable nobility of her spirit was no sooner recognized by me than I was shocked throughout by a sudden light, contrasting me appallingly with this supreme of women, who swept the earth aside for truth. I had never before received a distinct intimation of my littleness of nature, and my first impulse was to fly from thought, and then, as if to prove myself justly accused, I caught myself regretting—no, not regretting, gazing, as it were, on a picture of regrets—that Ottilia was not a romantic little lady of semi-celestial rank, exquisitely rash, wilful, desperately enamoured, bearing as many flying hues and peeps of fancy as a love-ballad, and not more roughly brushing the root-emotions. If she had but been such an one, what sprightly colours, delicious sadness, magical trans-

formations, tenderest intermixture of earth and heaven; what tears and sunbeams, divinest pathos; what descents from radiance to consolatory twilight, would have surrounded me for poetry and pride to dwell on! What captivating melody in the minor key would have been mine, though I lost her — the legacy of it all for ever! Say a petulant princess, a star of beauty, mad for me, and the whisper of our passion and sorrows traversing the flushed world! Was she coming? Not she, but a touchstone, a relentless mirror, a piercing eye, a mind severe as the goddess of the god's head; a princess indeed, but essentially a princess above women; a remorseless intellect, an actual soul visible in the flesh. She was truth. Was I true? Not so very false, yet how far from truth? The stains on me (a modern man writing his history is fugitive and crepuscular in alluding to them, as a woman kneeling at the ear-guichet) burnt like the blood-spots on the criminal compelled to touch his victim by savage ordinance, which knew the savage and how to search him. And these were faults of weakness rather than the sins of strength. I might as fairly hope for absolution of them from Ottilia as from offended laws of my natural being, gentle though she was, and charitable.

Was I not guilty of letting her come on to me hoodwinked at this moment? I had a faint memory of Miss Goodwin's saying that she had been deceived, and I suggested a plan of holding aloof until she had

warned the princess of my perfect recovery, to leave it at her option to see me.

"Yes," Miss Goodwin assented: "if you like, Harry."

Her compassion for me only tentatively encouraged the idea. "It would, perhaps, be right. You are the judge. If you can do it. You are acting bravely." She must have laughed at me in her heart. I shook my head perusingly, murmuring "No;" and then a decisive negative and a deep sigh. The moods of half-earnest men and feeble lovers narrowly escape the farcical, if they do at all.

She adopted my plan in a vigorous outline of how to proceed.

"I think it would be honourable, Harry."

"It would be horrible, horrible! No, since she has come I wish!—but the mischief is done."

"You are quite a boy."

I argued that it was not to be a boy to meet and face a difficult situation.

She replied that it was to be a boy of boys not to perceive that the sacrifice would never be accepted.

"Why, an old maid can teach you," she said, scornfully, and rebuked me for failing to seize my opportunity to gain credit with her for some show of magnanimous spirit. "Men are all selfish in love," she concluded, most logically.

The hours wore on. My curse of introspection left me; and descending through the town to the pier,

amid the breezy blue skirts and bonnet-strings, we watched the packet-boat approaching. There was in advance one of the famous swift island wherries. Something went wrong with it, for it was overtaken, and the steamer came in first. I jumped on board, much bawled at. Out of a crowd of unknown visages, Janet appeared: my aunt Dorothy was near her. The pair began chattering of my paleness, and wickedness in keeping my illness unknown to them. They had seen Temple on an excursion to London; he had betrayed me as he would have betrayed an archangel to Janet.

"Will you not look at us, Harry?" they both said.

The passengers were quitting the boat, strangers every one.

"Harry, have we really offended you in coming?" said Janet.

My aunt Dorothy took the blame on herself.

I scarcely noticed them, beyond leading them on to the pier-steps and leaving them under charge of Miss Goodwin, who had, in matters of luggage and porterage, the practical mind and aplomb of an Englishwoman that has passed much of her time on the Continent. I fancied myself vilely duped by this lady. The boat was empty of its passengers; a grumbling pier-man, wounded in his dignity, notified to me that there were fines for disregard of the Company's rules and regulations. His tone altered; he touched his hat: "Didn't know who you was, my lord." Janet overheard him, and her face was humorous.

"*We* may break the rules, you see," I said to her.

"We saw him landing on the other side of the water," she replied; so spontaneously did the circumstance turn her thoughts on my father.

"Did you speak to him?"

"No."

"You avoided him?"

"Aunty and I thought it best. He landed there was a crowd."

Miss Goodwin interposed: "You go to Harry's hotel?"

"Grandada is coming down to-morrow or next day," Janet prompted my aunt Dorothy.

"If we could seek for a furnished house; Uberly would watch the luggage," Dorothy murmured in distress.

"Furnished houses, even rooms at hotels, are doubtful in the height of the season," Miss Goodwin remarked. "Last night I engaged the only decent set of rooms I could get, for friends of Harry's who are coming."

"No wonder he was disappointed at seeing us—he was expecting them!" said Janet, smiling a little.

"They are sure to come," said Miss Goodwin.

Near us a couple of yachtsmen were conversing.

"Oh, he'll be back in a day or two," one said. "When you've once tasted that old boy, you can't do without him. I remember when I was a youngster—it was in Lady Betty Bolton's day; she married old

Edbury, you know, first wife—the Magnificent was then in his prime. He spent his money in a week: so he hired an eighty-ton schooner; he laid violent hands on a Jew, bagged him, lugged him on board, and sailed away."

"What the deuce did he want with a Jew?" cried the other.

"Oh, the Jew supplied cheques for a three months' cruise in the Mediterranean, and came home, I heard, very good friends with his pirate. That's only one of dozens."

The unconscious slaughterers laughed.

"On another occasion"—I heard it said by the first speaker, as they swung round to parade the pier, and passed on narrating.

"Not an hotel, if it is possible to avoid it," my aunt Dorothy, with heightened colour, urged Miss Goodwin. They talked together.

"Grandada is coming to you, Harry," Janet said. "He has business in London, or he would have been here now. Our horses and carriages follow us: everything you would like. He does love you! he is very anxious. I'm afraid his health is worse than he thinks. Temple did not say your father was here, but grandada must have suspected it when he consented to our coming, and said he would follow us. So that looks well perhaps. He has been much quieter since your money was paid back to you. If they should meet . . . no, I hope they will not: grandada hates noise. And,

Harry, let me tell you: it may be nothing: if he questions you, do not take fire; just answer plainly: I'm sure you understand. One in a temper at a time I'm sure's enough: you have only to be patient with him. He has been going to London, to the City, seeing lawyers, bankers, brokers, and coming back muttering. Ah! dear old man. And when he ought to have peace! Harry, the poor will regret him in a thousand places. I write a great deal for him now, and I know how they will. What are you looking at?"

I was looking at a man of huge stature, of the stiffest build, whose shoulders showed me their full breadth while he stood displaying frontwards the open of his hand in a salute.

"Schwartz!" I called. Janet started, imagining some fierce interjection. The giant did not stir.

But others had heard. A lady stepped forward. "Dear Mr. Harry Richmond! Then you are better? We had most alarming news of you."

I bowed to the Frau von Dittmarsch, anciently Miss Sibley.

"The princess?"

"She is here."

Frau von Dittmarsch clasped Miss Goodwin's hand. I was touching Ottilia's. A veil partly swathed her face. She trembled: the breeze robbed me of her voice.

Our walk down the pier was almost in silence. Miss Goodwin assumed the guardianship of the foreign ladies.

I had to break from them and provide for my aunt Dorothy and Janet.

"They went over in a little boat, they were so impatient. Who is she?" Dorothy Beltham asked.

"The Princess Ottilia," said Janet.

"Are you certain? Is it really, Harry?"

I confirmed it, and my aunt said, "I should have guessed it could be no other; she has a foreign grace."

"General Goodwin was with them when the boat came in from the island," said Janet. "He walked up to Harry's father, and you noticed, aunty, that the ladies stood away, as if they wished to be unobserved, like us, and pulled down their veils. They would not wait for our boat. We passed them crossing. People joked about the big servant over-weighting the wherry."

Dorothy Beltham thought the water too rough for little boats.

"She knows what a sea is," I said.

Janet gazed steadily after the retreating figures, and then commended me to the search for rooms. The end of it was that I abandoned my father's suite to them. An accommodating linen-draper possessed of a sea-view, and rooms which hurled the tenant to the windows in desire for it, gave me harbourage.

Till dusk I scoured the town to find Miss Goodwin, without whom there was no clue to the habitation I was seeking, and must have passed blindly again and again. My aunt Dorothy and Janet thanked me for my consideration in sitting down to dine with them; they

excused my haste to retire. I heard no reproaches except on account of my not sending them word of my illness. Janet was not warm. She changed in colour and voice when I related what I had heard from Miss Goodwin, namely, that "some one" had informed the princess I was in a dying state. I was obliged to offer up my father as a shield for Ottilia, lest false ideas should tarnish the image of her in their minds. Janet did not speak of him. The thought stood in her eyes; and there lies the evil of a sore subject among persons of one household: they have not to speak to exhibit their minds.

After a night of suspense I fell upon old Schwartz and Aennchen out in the earliest dawn, according to their German habits, to have a gaze at sea, and strange country and people. Aennchen was all wonder at the solitary place, Schwartz at the big ships. But when they tried to direct me to the habitation of their mistress, it was discovered by them that they had lost their bearings. Aennchen told me the margravine had been summoned to Rippau just before they left Sarkeld. Her mistress had informed Baroness Turckems of her intention to visit England. Prince Ernest was travelling in France.

The hour which brought me to Ottilia was noon. The arrangements of the ladies could only grant me thirty minutes, for Janet was to drive the princess out into the country to view the island. She and my aunt Dorothy had been already introduced. Miss Goodwin,

after presenting them, insisted upon ceremoniously accompanying me to the house. Quite taking the vulgar view of a proceeding such as the princess had been guilty of, and perhaps fearing summary audacity and interestedness in the son of a father like mine, she ventured on lecturing me, as though it lay with me to restrain the fair romantic head, forbear from calling up my special advantages, advise, and stand to the wisdom of this world, and be the man of honour. The princess had said: "Not see him when I have come to him?" I reassured my undiscerning friend partly, not wholly.

"Would it be commonly sensible or civil, to refuse to see me, having come?"

Miss Goodwin doubted.

I could indicate forcibly, because I felt, the clear-judging brain and tempered self-command whereby Ottilia had gained her decision.

Miss Goodwin nodded and gave me the still-born affirmative of politeness. Her English mind expressed itself willing to have exonerated the rash, great lady for visiting a dying lover, but he was not the same person now that he was on his feet, consequently her expedition wore a different aspect:—my not dying condemned her. She entreated me to keep the fact of the princess's arrival unknown to my father, on which point we were one. Intensely enthusiastic for the men of her race, she would have me, above all things, by a form of adjuration designed to be a masterpiece of persuasive rhetoric, "prove myself an Englishman." I was to

show that "the honour, interests, reputation and position of any lady (demented or not," she added) "were as precious to me as to the owner:" that "no woman was ever in peril of a shadow of loss in the hands of an English gentleman," and so forth, rather surprisingly to me, remembering her off-hand manner of the foregoing day. But the sense of responsibility thrown upon her ideas of our superior national dignity had awakened her fervider naturalness—made her a different person, as we say when accounting, in our fashion, for what a little added heat may do.

The half hour allotted to me fled. I went from the room and the house, feeling that I had seen and heard her who was barely of the world of humankind for me, so strongly did imagination fly with her. I kissed her fingers, I gazed in her eyes, I heard the beloved voice. All passed too swift for happiness. Recollections set me throbbing, but recollection brought longing. She said, "Now I have come I must see you, Harry." Did it signify that to see me was a piece of kindness at war with her judgment? She rejoiced at my perfect recovery, though it robbed her of the plea in extenuation of this step she had taken. She praised me for abstaining to write to her, when I was stammering a set of hastily-impressed reasons to excuse myself for the omission. She praised my step into Parliament. It did not seem to involve a nearer approach to her. She said, "You have not wasted your time in England." It was for my solitary interests that she cared then.

I brooded desperately. I could conceive an overlooking height that made her utterance simple and consecutive: I could not reach it. Topics which to me were palpitating, had no terror for her. She said, "I have offended my father; I have written to him; he will take me away." In speaking of the letter which had caused her to offend, she did not blame the writer. I was suffered to run my eyes over it, and was ashamed. It read to me too palpably as an outcry to delude and draw her hither:—pathos and pathos: the father holding his dying son in his arms, his sole son, Harry Richmond; the son set upon by enemies in the night: the lover never daring to beg for a sight of his beloved ere he passed away:—not an ill-worded letter; read uncritically, it may have been touching: it must have been, though it was the reverse for me. I frowned, broke down in regrets, under sharp humiliation. She said, "You knew nothing of it. A little transgression is the real offender. When we are once out of the way traced for us, we are in danger of offending at every step; we are as lawless as the outcasts." That meant, "My turning aside to you originally was the blameable thing." It might mean, "My love of you sets my ideas of duty at variance with my father's." Might it also mean, "I am still in that road extra muros?" She smiled; nothing was uttered in a tone of despondency. Her high courage and breeding gave her even in this pitfall the smoothness which most women keep for society. Why she had not sent me any message or

tidings of herself to Riversley was not a matter that she could imagine to perplex me: she could not imagine me losing faith in her. The least we could do, I construed it, the religious bond between us was a faith in one another that should sanctify to our souls the external injuries it caused us to commit. But she talked in no such strain. Her delight in treading English ground was her happy theme. She said, "It is as young as when we met in the forest;" namely, the feeling revived for England. How far off we were from the green Devonshire coast, was one of her questions, suggestive of our old yacht-voyage lying among her dreams. Excepting an extreme and terrorizing paleness, there was little to fever me with the thought that she suffered mortally. Of reproach, not a word; nor of regret. At the first touch of hands, when we stood together, alone, she said, "Would hearing of your recovery have given me peace?" My privileges were the touch of hands, the touch of her fingers to my lips, a painless hearing and seeing, and passionate recollection. She said, "Impatience is not for us, Harry:"— I was not to see her again before the evening. These were the last words she said, and seemed the lightest until my hot brain made a harvest of them transcending thrice-told vows of love. Did they not mean, 'We two wait:' therefore, 'The years are bondsmen to our steadfastness.' Could sweeter have been said? They might mean nothing!

She was veiled when Janet drove her out; Janet

sitting upright in her masterly way, smoothing her pet ponies with the curl of her whip, chatting and smiling; the princess slightly leaning back. I strode up to the country roads, proud of our land's beauty under a complacent sky. By happy chance, which in a generous mood I ascribed to Janet's good nature, I came across them at a seven miles' distance. They were talking spiritedly: what was wonderful, they gave not much heed to me: they seemed on edge for one another's conversation: each face was turned to the other's, and after nodding an adieu they resumed the animated discourse. I had been rather in alarm lest Ottilia should think little of Janet. They passed out of sight without recurring to a thought of me behind them.

In the evening I was one among a group of ladies. I had the opportunity of hearing the running interchange between Ottilia and Janet, which appeared to be upon equal terms; indeed, Janet led. The subjects were not very deep. Plain wits, candour, and an unpretending tongue, it seemed, could make common subjects attractive, as fair weather does our English woods and fields. The princess was attracted by something in Janet. I myself felt the sway of something, while observing Ottilia's rapt pleasure in her talk and her laughter, with those funny familiar frowns and current dimples twisting and melting away like a play of shadows on the eddies of the brook.

"I'm glad to be with her," Janet said of Ottilia.

It was just in that manner she spoke in Ottilia's

presence. Why it should sound elsewhere unsatisfactorily blunt, and there possess a finished charm, I could not understand.

I mentioned to Janet that I feared my father would be returning.

She contained herself with a bridled "Oh!"

We were of one mind as to the necessity for keeping him absent, if possible.

"Harry, you'll pardon me; I can't talk of him," said she.

I proposed half-earnestly to foil his return by going to London at once.

"That's manly; that's nice of you," Janet said.

This was on our walk from the house at night. My aunt Dorothy listened, pressing my arm. The next morning Janet urged me to go at once. "Keep him away, bring down grandada, Harry. She cannot quit the island, because she has given Prince Ernest immediate rendezvous here. You must not delay to go. Yes, the Countess of Delzenburg shall have your excuses. And no, I promise you I will run nobody down. Besides, if I do, aunty will be at hand to plead for the defence, and she can! She has a way that binds one to accept everything she says, and Temple ought to study with her for a year or two before he wears his gown. Bring him back with you and grandada. He is esteemed here at his true worth. I love him for making her in love with English boys. I leave the men for those who know them, but English boys are unrivalled, I declare.

Honesty, bravery, modesty, and nice looks! They are so nice in their style and their way of talking. I tell her, our men may be shy and sneering,—awkward, I daresay; but our boys beat the world. Do bring down Temple. I should so like her to see a cricket-match between two good elevens of our boys, Harry, while she is in England! We could have arranged for one at Riversley."

I went, and I repressed the idea, on my way, that Janet had manœuvred by sending me off to get rid of me, but I felt myself a living testimony to her heartlessness: for no girl of any heart, acting the part of friend, would have allowed me to go without a leave-taking of her I loved: few would have been so cruel as to declare it a duty to go at all, especially when the chances were that I might return to find the princess wafted away. Ottilia's condescension had done her no good. "Turn to the right, that's your path; on." She seemed to speak in this style, much as she made her touch of the reins understood by her ponies. "I'll take every care of the princess," she said. Her conceit was unbounded. I revelled in contemptuous laughter at her assumption of the post of leader with Ottilia. However, it was as well that I should go: there was no trusting my father.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHICH FORESHADOWS A GENERAL GATHERING.

At our Riversley station I observed the squire, in company with Captain Bulsted, jump into a nighbouring carriage. I joined them, and was called upon to answer various inquiries. The squire gave me one of his short, tight grasps of the hand, in which there was warmth and shyness, our English mixture. The captain whispered in my ear: "He oughtn't to be alone."

"How's the great-grandmother of the tribe?" said I.

Captain Bulsted nodded; as if he understood, but was at sea until I mentioned the bottle of rum and the remarkable length of that old lady's measurement.

"Ay, to be sure! a grand old soul," he said. "You know that scum of old, Harry."

I laughed, and so did he, at which I laughed the louder.

"He laughs, I suppose, because his party's got a majority in the House," said the squire.

"We gave you a handsome surplus this year, sir."

"Sweated out of the country's skin and bone, ay!"

"You were complimented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

"Yes, that fellow's compliments are like a cabman's, and cry fool: — he never thanks you but when he's overpaid."

Captain Bulsted applauded the sarcasm.

"Why did you keep out of knowledge all this time, Hal?" my grandfather asked.

I referred him to the captain.

"Hang it," cried Captain Bulsted, "do you think I'd have been doing duty for you if I'd known where to lay hold of you?"

"Well, if you didn't shake hands with me, you touched my toes," said I, and thanked him with all my heart for his kindness to an old woman on the point of the grave. I had some fun to flavour melancholy with.

My grandfather resumed his complaint: "You might have gone clean off, and we none the wiser."

"Are we quite sure that his head's clean on?" said the mystified captain.

"Of course we should run to him, wherever he was, if he was down on his back," the squire muttered.

"Ay, ay, sir; of course," quoth Captain William, frowning to me to reciprocate this relenting mood. "But, Harry, where did you turn off that night. We sat up expecting you. My poor Julia was in a terrible fright, my lad. Eh? speak up."

I raised the little finger.

"Oh, oh," went he, happily reassured; but, reflecting, added: "A bout of it?"

I dropped him a penitent nod.

"That's bad, though," said he.

"Then why did you tip me a bottle of rum, Captain William?"

"By George, Harry, you've had a crack o' the sconce!" he exclaimed, more sagaciously than he was aware of.

My grandfather wanted to keep me by his side in London until we two should start for the island next day; but his business was in the city, mine towards the west. We appointed to meet two hours after reaching the terminus.

He turned to me while giving directions to his man.

"You've got *him* down there, I suppose?"

"My father's in town, sir. He shall keep away," I said.

"Humph! I mayn't object to see him."

This set me thinking.

Captain Bulsted—previously asking me in a very earnest manner whether I was really all right and sound—favoured me with a hint:

"The squire has plunged into speculations of his own, or else he is peeping at somebody else's. No danger of the dad being mixed up with Companies? Let's hope not. Julia pledged her word to Janet that I would look after the old squire. I suppose

I can go home this evening? My girl hates to be alone."

"By all means," said I; and the captain proposed to leave the squire at his hotel, in the event of my failing to join him in the city.

"But don't fail, if you can help it," he urged me; "for things somehow, my dear Harry, appear to me to look like the compass when the needle gives signs of atmospheric disturbance. My only reason for saying so is common observation. You can judge for yourself that he is glad to have you with him."

I told the captain I was equally glad; for, in fact, my grandfather's quietness and apparently friendly disposition tempted me to petition for a dower for the princess at once, so that I might be in the position to offer Prince Ernest on his arrival a distinct alternative; supposing — it was still but a supposition — Ottilia should empower me. Incessant dialogues of perpetually shifting tendencies passed between Ottilia and me in my brain—now dark, now mildly fair, now very wild, on one side at least. Never, except by downright force of will, could I draw from the phantom of her one purely irrational outcry, so deeply-rooted was the knowledge of her nature and mine; and when I did force it, I was no gainer: a puppet stood in her place—the vision of Ottilia melted out in threads of vapour. "And yet she has come to me; she has braved everything to come." I might say that, to liken her to the women who break rules and read duties by their own

light, but I could not cheat my knowledge of her. Mrs. Waddy met me in the hall of my father's house, as usual, pressing, I regretted to see, one hand to her side. "Her heart," she said, "was easily set pitty-pat now." She had been, by her master's orders, examined by two of the chief physicians of the kingdom, "baronets both." They advised total rest. As far as I could apprehend, their baronetcies and doings in high regions had been of more comfort than their prescriptions.

"What I am I must be," she said, meekly; "and I cannot quit his service till he's abroad again, or I drop. He has promised me a monument. I don't want it; but it shows his kindness."

A letter from Heriot informed me that the affair between Edbury and me was settled: he could not comprehend how."

"What is this new Jury of Honour? Who are the jurymen?" he asked, and affected wit.

I thanked him for a thrashing in a curt reply.

My father had left the house early in the morning. Mrs. Waddy believed that he meant to dine that evening at the season's farewell dinner of the Trump-Trick Club: "Leastways, Tollingby has orders to lay out his gentlemen's-dinners' evening-suit. Yesterday afternoon he flew down to Chippenden, and was home late. To-day he's in the city, or one of the squares. Lady Edbury's —ah!—detained in town with the jaundice, or toothache. He said he was sending to France for a dentist—or was it Germany, for some lady's eyes? I am sure

I don't know. Well or ill, so long as you're anything to him, he will abound. Pocket and purse! You know him by this time, Mr. Harry. Oh, my heart!"

A loud knock at the door had brought on the poor creature's palpitations.

This visitor was no other than Prince Ernest. The name on his card was Graf von Delzenburg, and it set my heart leaping to as swift a measure as Mrs. Waddy's.

Hearing that I was in the house, he desired to see me.

We met, with a formal bow.

"I congratulate you right heartily upon being out of the list of the nekrōn," he said, civilly. "I am on my way to one of your watering-places, whither my family should have preceded me. Do you publish the names and addresses of visitors daily, as it is the custom with us?"

I relieved his apprehensions on that head: "Here and there, rarely; and only at the hotels, I believe." The excuse was furnished for offering the princess's address.

"Possibly, in a year or two, we may have the pleasure of welcoming you at Sarkeld," said the prince, extending his hand. "Then, you have seen the Countess of Dalzenburg?"

"On the day of her arrival, your Highness. Ladies of my family are staying on the island."

"Ah?"

He paused, and invited me to bow to him. We

bowed thus in the room, in the hall, and at the street-door.

For what purpose could he have called on my father? To hear the worst at once? That seemed likely, supposing him to have lost his peculiar confidence in the princess, of which the courtly paces he had put me through precluded me from judging.

But I guessed acutely that it was not his intention to permit of my meeting Ottilia a second time. The blow was hard: I felt it as if it had been struck already, and thought I had gained resignation, until, like a man reprieved on his road to execution, the narrowed circle of my heart opened out to the breadth of the world in a minute. Returning from the city, I hurried to my father's house, late in the afternoon, and heard that he had started to overtake the prince, leaving word that the prince was to be found at his address in the island. No doubt could exist regarding the course I was bound to take. I drove to my grandfather, stated my case to him, and by sheer vehemence took the wind out of his sails; so that when I said, "I am the only one alive who can control my father," he answered mildly, "Seems t'other way," and chose a small snort for the indulgence of his private opinion.

"What! this princess came over alone, and is down driving out with my girl under an alias?" he said, showing sour aversion at the prospect of a collision with the foreign species, as expressive as the ridge of a cat's back.

Temple came to dine with us, so I did not leave him quite to himself, and Temple promised to accompany him down to the island.

"Oh, go, if you like," the fretted old man dismissed me: "I've got enough to think over. Hold him fast to stand up to me within forty-eight hours, present time; you know who I mean; I've got a question or two for him. How he treats his foreign princes and princesses don't concern me. I'd say, like the Prevention-Cruelty-Animal's man to the keeper of the menagerie, 'Lecture 'em, wound their dignity, hurt their feelings, only don't wop 'em.' I don't wish any harm to them, but what the deuce they do here nosing after my grandson! There, go; we shall be having it out and ha' done with to-morrow or next day. I've run the badger to earth, else I'm not fit to follow a scent."

He grumbled at having to consume other than his Riversley bread, butter, beef, and ale for probably another fortnight. One of the boasts of Riversley was that while the rest of the world ate and drank poison, the Grange lived on its own solid substance, defying malefactory Radical tricksters.

Temple was left to hear the rest. He had the sweetest of modest wishes for a re-introduction to Ottilia.

CHAPTER IX.

WE ARE ALL IN MY FATHER'S NET.

JOURNEYING down by the mail-train in the face of a great sunken sunset broken with cloud, I chanced to ask myself what it was that I seriously desired to have. My purpose to curb my father was sincere and good; but concerning my heart's desires, witherward did they point? I thought of Janet—she made me gasp for air; of Ottilia, and she made me long for earth. Sharp, as I write it, the distinction smote me. I might have been divided by an electrical shot into two halves, with such an equal force was I drawn this way and that, pointing nowhither. To strangle the thought of either one of them was like the pang of death; yet it did not strike me that I loved the two: they were apart in my mind, actually as if I had been divided. I passed the Riversley station under sombre sunset fires, saddened by the fancy that my old home and vivacious Janet were ashes, past hope. I came on the smell of salt air, and had that other spirit of woman around me, of whom the controlled sea-deeps were an image, who spoke to my

soul like starlight. Much wise counsel, and impatience of the wisdom, went on within me. I walked like a man with a yawning wound, and had to whip the sense of passion for a drug. Towards which one it strove I know not; it was blind and stormy as the night.

Not a boatman would take me across. The lights of the island lay like a crown on the water. I paced the ramparts, eyeing them, breathing the keen salt of thundering waves, until they were robbed of their magic by the coloured east.

It is, I have learnt, out of the conflict of sensations such as I then underwent that a young man's brain and morality, supposing him not to lean overmuch to sickly sentiment, becomes gradually enriched and strengthened, and himself shaped for capable manhood. I was partly conscious of a better condition in the morning; and a sober morning it was to me after my long sentinel's step to and fro. I found myself possessed of one key—whether the right one or not—wherewith to read the princess, which was never possible to me when I was under stress of passion, or of hope or despair; my perplexities over what she said, how she looked, cease to trouble me. I read her by this strange light: that she was a woman who could only love intelligently—love, that is, in the sense of giving herself. She had the power of passion, and it could be stirred; but he who kindled it wrecked his chance if he could not stand clear in her intellect's unsparing gaze. Twice already she must have felt herself disillusioned by me. This

third time, possibly, she blamed her own fatally credulous tenderness, not me; but it was her third awakening, and could affection and warmth of heart combat it? Her child's enthusiasm for my country had prepared her for the impression which the waxen mind of the dreamy invalid received deeply; and so, aided by the emotional blood of youth, she gave me place in her imagination, probing me still curiously, as I remembered, at a season when her sedate mind was attaining to joint deliberations with the impulsive, overgenerous heart. Then ensued for her the successive shocks of discernment. She knew me to have some of the vices, many follies, all the intemperateness of men who carve a way for themselves in the common roads, if barely they do that. And resembling common men (men in a judgment elective as hers, common, however able), I was not assuredly to be separated by her from my associations; from the thought of my father, for example. Her look at him in the lake-palace library, and her manner in unfolding and folding his recent letter to her, and in one or two necessitated allusions, embraced a kind of grave, pitiful humour, beyond smiles or any outward expression, as if the acknowledgment that it was so quite obliterated the wonder that it should be so—that one such as he could exercise influence upon her destiny. Or she may have made her reckoning generally, not personally, upon our human destinies: it is the more likely, if, as I divine, the calm oval of her lifted eyelids contemplated him in the ful-

ness of the recognition that this world, of which we hope unuttered things, can be shifted and swayed by an ignis-fatuus. The father of one now seen through, could hardly fail of being transfixed himself. It was horrible to think of. I would rather have added a vice to my faults than that she should have penetrated him.

Nearing the island, I was reminded of the early morning when I landed on the Flemish flats. I did not expect a similar surprise, but before my rowers had pulled in, the tall beaconhead of old Schwartz notified that his mistress might be abroad. Janet walked with her. I ran up the steps to salute them, and had Ottilia's hand in mine.

"Prince Ernest has arrived?"

"My father came yesterday evening."

"Do you leave to-day?"

"I cannot tell; he will decide."

It seemed a good omen, until I scanned Janet's sombre face.

"You will not see us out for the rest of the day, Harry," said she.

"That is your arrangement?"

"It is."

"Your own?"

"Mine, if you like."

There was something hard in her way of speaking, as though she blamed me, and the princess were under her protection against me. She vouchsafed no friendly significance of look and tone.

In spite of my readiness to criticise her (which in our language means condemn) for always assuming leadership with whomsoever she might be, I was impressed by the air of high-bred friendliness existing between her and the princess. Their interchange was pleasant to hear. Ottilia had caught the spirit of her frank manner of speech; and she, though in a less degree, the princess's fine ease and sweetness. They conversed, apparently, like equal minds. On material points, Janet unhesitatingly led. It was she who brought the walk to a close.

"Now, Harry, you had better go and have a little sleep. I should like to speak to you early."

Ottilia immediately put her hand out to me.

I begged permission to see her to her door.

Janet replied for her, indicating old Schwartz: "We have a protector, you see, six feet and a half."

An hour later, Schwartz was following her to the steps of her hotel. She saw me, and waited. For a wonder, she displayed reluctance in disburdening herself of what she had to say. "Harry, you know that he has come? He and Prince Ernest came together. Get him to leave the island at once: he can return to-morrow. Grandada writes of wishing to see him. Get him away to-day."

"Is the prince going to stay here?" I asked.

"No. I dare say I am only guessing, I hope so. He has threatened the prince."

"What with?"

"Oh! Harry, can't you understand? I'm no reader of etiquette, but even I can see that the story of a young princess travelling over to England alone to visit and you, and her father fetching her away! The prince is almost at his mercy, unless you *make* the man behave like a gentleman. This is exactly the thing Miss Goodwin feared!"

"But who's to hear of the story?" said I.

Janet gave an impatient sigh.

"Do you mean that my father has threatened to publish it, Janet?"

"I won't say he has. He has made the prince afraid to move: that I think is true."

"Did the princess herself mention it to you?"

"She understands her situation, I am sure."

"Did she speak of 'the man,' as you call him?"

"Yes: not as I do. You must try by-and-by to forgive me. Whether we set a trap or not, he has decoyed her—don't frown at words—and it remains for you to act as I don't doubt you will; but lose no time. Determine. Oh! if I were a man!"

"You would muzzle us?"

"Muzzle, or anything you please; I would make any one related to me behave honourably. I would give him the alternative . . ."

"You foolish girl! suppose he took it?"

"I would make him feel my will. He should not take it. Keep to the circumstances, Harry. If you

have no control over him—I should think I was not fit to live, in such a position! No control over him at a moment like this? and the princess in danger of having her reputation hurt! Surely, Harry! But why should I speak to you as if you were undecided!"

"Where is he?"

"At the house where you sleep. He surrendered his rooms here very kindly."

"Aunty has seen him?"

Janet blushed: I thought I knew why. It was for subtler reasons than I should have credited her with conceiving.

"She sent for him, at my request, late last night. She believed her influence would be decisive. So did I. She could not even make the man perceive that he was acting—to use her poor dear old-fashioned word, reprehensibly in frightening the prince to further your interests. From what I gathered he went off in a song about them. She said he talked so well! And aunty Dorothy, too! I should nearly as soon have expected grandada to come in for his turn of the delusion. How I wish he was here! Uberly goes by the first boat to bring him down. I feel with Miss Goodwin that it will be a disgrace for all of us—the country's disgrace. As for our family! . . Harry, and your name! Good-by. Do your best."

I was in the mood to ask, "On behalf of the country?" She had, however, a glow and a ringing articulation in her excitement that forbade trifling; a

minute's reflection set me weighing my power of will against my father's. I nodded to her.

"Come to us when you are at liberty," she called.

I have said that I weighed my power of will against my father's. Contemplation of the state of the scales did not send me striding to meet him. Let it be remembered—I had it strongly in memory—that he habitually deluded himself under the supposition that the turn of all events having an aspect of good fortune had been planned by him of old, and were offered to him as the legitimately-won fruits of a politic life. While others deemed him mad, or merely reckless, wild, a creature living for the day, he enjoyed the conceit of being a profound schemer, in which he was fortified by a really extraordinary adroitness to take advantage of occurrences: and because he was prompt in an emergency, and quick to profit of a crisis, he was deluded to imagine that he had created it. Such a man would be with difficulty brought to surrender his prize.

Again, there was his love for me. 'Pater est, Pamphile;—difficile est.' How was this vast conceit of a not unreal paternal love to be encountered? The sense of honour and of decency might appeal to him personally; would either of them get a hearing if he fancied them to be standing in opposition to my dearest interests? I, unhappily, as the case would be sure to present itself to him, appeared the living example of his eminently politic career. After establishing me the heir of one of the wealthiest of English commoners, would

he be likely to forego any desperate chance of enpobling me by the brilliant marriage? His dreadful devotion to me extinguished the hope that he would, unless I should happen to be particularly masterful in dealing with him. I heard his nimble and overwhelming volubility like a flood advancing. That could be withstood, and his arguments and persuasions. But by what steps could I restrain the man himself? I said "the man," as Janet did. He figured in my apprehensive imagination as an engine more than as an individual. Lassitude oppressed me. I felt that I required every access of strength possible, physical besides moral, in anticipation of our encounter, and took a swim in sea-water, which displaced my drowsy fit, and some alarming intimations of cowardice menacing a paralysis of the will: I had not altogether recovered from my gipsy drubbing. And now I wanted to have the contest over instantly. It seemed presumable that my father had slept at my lodgings. There, however, the report of him was that he had inspected the rooms, highly complimented the owner of them, and vanished. Returning to the pier, I learnt that he had set sail in his hired yacht for the sister town on the Solent, at an early hour:—for what purpose? I knew of it too late to intercept it. One of the squire's horses trotted me over; I came upon Colonel Hibbert Segrave near the club-house, and heard that my father was off again: "But your German prince and papa-in-law shall be free of the club for the next fortnight," said he, and cordially asked to have the date of

the marriage. My face astonished him. He excused himself for speaking of this happy event so abruptly. A sting of downright anger drove me back at a rapid canter. It flashed on me that this Prince Ernest, whose suave fashion of depressing me, and philosophical skill in managing his daughter, had induced me to regard him as a pattern of astuteness, was really both credulous and feeble, or else supremely unsuspecting: and I was confirmed in the latter idea on hearing that he had sailed to visit the opposite harbour and docks on board my father's yacht. Janet shared my secret opinion.

"The prince is a gentleman," she said.

Her wrath and disgust were unspeakable. My aunt Dorothy blamed her for overdue severity. "The prince, I suppose, goes of his own free will where he pleases."

Janet burst out, "Oh! can't you see through it, aunty? The prince goes about without at all knowing that the person who takes him—Harry sees it—is making him compromise himself: and by-and-by the prince will discover that he has no will of his own, whatever he may wish to resolve upon doing."

"Is he quite against Harry?" asked my aunt Dorothy.

"Dear aunty, he's a prince, and a proud man. He will never in his lifetime consent to . . . to what you mean, without being hounded into it. I haven't the slightest idea whether anything will force him. I know that the princess would have too much pride to submit,

even to save her name. But it's her name that's in danger. Think of the scandal to a sovereign princess! I know the signification of that now; I used to laugh at Harry's 'sovereign princess.' She is one, and thorough! there is no one like her; no one living is like her. Don't you understand, aunty, that the intrigue, plot—I don't choose to be nice upon terms—may be perfectly successful, and do good to nobody. The prince may be tricked; the princess, I am sure, will not."

Janet's affectation of an intimate and peculiar knowledge of the princess was a show of her character that I was accustomed to; still, it was evident they had conversed much, and perhaps intimately. I led her to tell me that the princess had expressed no views upon my father. "He does not come within her scope, Harry." 'Scope' was one of Janet's new words, wherewith she would now and then fall to seasoning a serviceable but savourless, outworn vocabulary of the common table. In spite of that and other offences, rendered prominent to me by the lifting of her lip and her frown when she had to speak of my father, I was on her side, not on his. Her estimation of the princess was soundly based. She discerned exactly the nature of Ottilia's entanglement, and her peril.

She and my aunt Dorothy passed the afternoon with Ottilia, while I crossed the head of the street, looking down at the one house, where the princess was virtually imprisoned, either by her father's express injunction or her own discretion. And it was as well that she should

not be out. The yachting season had brought many London men to the island. I met several who had not forgotten the newspaper-paragraph assertions and contradictions. Lord Alton, Admiral Loftus and others were on the pier and in the outfitters' shops, eager for gossip, as the languid stretch of indolence inclines men to be. The admiral asked me for the whereabouts of Prince Ernest's territory. He, too, said that the prince would be free of the Club during his residence, adding: "Where is he?"—not a question demanding an answer. The men might have let the princess go by, but there would have been questions urgently demanding answers had she been seen by their women.

Late in the evening my father's yacht was sighted from the pier. Just as he reached his moorings, and his boat was hauled round, the last steamer came in. Sharp-eyed Janet saw the squire on board among a crowd, and Temple next to him, supporting his arm.

"Has grandada been ill?" she exclaimed.

My chief concern was to see my father's head rising in the midst of the crowd, uncovering repeatedly. Prince Ernest and General Goodwin were behind him, stepping off the lower pier-platform. The general did not look pleased. My grandfather, with Janet holding his arm in the place of Temple, stood waiting to see that his man had done his duty by the luggage.

My father, advancing towards them, perceived me, and almost taking the squire into his affectionate saluta-

tion, said: "Nothing could be more opportune than your arrival, Mr. Beltham."

The squire rejoined: "I wanted to see you, Mr. Richmond, and not in public."

"I grant the private interview, sir, at your convenience."

Janet went up to General Goodwin. My father talked to me, and lost a moment in shaking Temple's hand and saying kind things.

"Name any hour you please, Mr. Beltham," he resumed; "meantime, I shall be glad to effect the introduction between Harry's grandfather and his Highness Prince Ernest of Eppenwelzen-Sarkeld."

He turned. General Goodwin was hurrying the prince up the steps, the squire at the same time retreating hastily. I witnessed the spectacle of both parties to the projected introduction swinging round to make their escape. My father glanced to right and left. He covered in the airiest fashion what would have been confusion to another by carrying on a jocose remark that he had left half spoken to Temple, and involved Janet in it, and soon—through sheer amiable volubility and his taking manner—the squire himself for a minute or so.

"Harry, I have to tell you she is not unhappy," Janet whispered rapidly. "She is reading of one of our great men alive now. She is glad to be on our ground." Janet named a famous admiral, kindling as a fiery beacon to our blood. She would have said more: she

looked the remainder; but she could have said nothing better fitted to spur me to the work she wanted done. Mournfulness dropped on me like a cloud in thinking of the bright little princess of my boyhood, and the Ottilia of to-day, faithful to her early passion for our sea-heroes and my country, though it had grievously entrapped her. And into what hands! Not into hands which could cast one ray of honour on a devoted head. The contrast between the sane service-giving men she admired, and the hopping skipping social meteor, weaver of webs, thrower of nets, who offered her his history for a nuptial acquisition, was ghastly, most discomforting. He seemed to have entangled us all.

He said that he had. He treated me now confessedly as a cypher. The prince, the princess, my grandfather, and me—he had gathered us together, he said. I heard from him that the prince, assisted by him in the part of an adviser, saw no way of cutting the knot but by a marriage. All were at hand for a settlement of the terms:—Providence and destiny were dragged in.

"Let's have no theatrical talk," I interposed.

"Certainly, Richie; the plainest English," he assented.

This was on the pier, while he bowed and greeted passing figures. I dared not unlink my arm, for fear of further mischief. I got him to my rooms, and insisted on his dining there.

"Dry bread will do," he said.

My anticipations of the nature of our wrestle were

correct. But I had not expected him to venture on the assertion that the prince was for the marriage. He met me at every turn with this downright iteration. "The prince consents: he knows his only chance is to yield. I have him fast."

"How?" I inquired.

"How, Richie? Where is your perspicuity? I have him here. I loosen a thousand tongues on him. I——"

"No, not on him; on the princess, you mean."

"On him. The princess is the willing party; she and you are one. On him, I say. 'Tis but a threat: I hold it in terrorem. And by heaven, son Richie, it assures me I have not lived and fought for nothing. 'Now is the day and now is the hour.' On your first birthday, my boy, I swore to marry you to one of the highest ladies upon earth: she was, as it turns out, then unborn. No matter: I keep my oath. Abandon it? pooh! you are—forgive me—silly. Pardon me for remarking it, you have not that dashing courage—never mind. The point is, I have my prince in his trap. We are perfectly polite, but I have him, and he acknowledges it; he shrugs: love has beaten him. Very well. And observe: I permit no squire-of-low-degree insinuations; none of that. The lady—all earthly blessings on her!—does not stoop to Harry Richmond. I have the announcement in the newspapers. I maintain it, the fruit of a life of long and earnest endeavour, legitimately won, by heaven it is! and with the constituted

authorities of my native land against me. Your grandad proposes formally for the princess to-morrow morning."

He quite maddened me. Merely to keep him silent I burst out in a flux of reproaches as torrent-like as his own could be; and all the time I was wondering whether it was true that a man who talked as he did, in his strain of florid flimsy, had actually done a practical thing.

The effect of my vehemence was to brace him and make him sedately emphatic. He declared himself to have gained entire possession of the prince's mind. He repeated his positive intention to employ his power for my benefit. Never did power of earth or of hell seem darker to me than he at that moment, when solemnly declaiming that he was prepared to forfeit my respect and love, die sooner than "yield his prince." He wore a new aspect, spoke briefly and pointedly, using the phrases of a determined man, and in voice and gesture signified that he had us all in a grasp of iron. The charge of his having plotted to bring it about he accepted with exultation.

"I admit," he said, "I did not arrange to have Germany present for a witness besides England, but since he is here, I take advantage of the fact, and to-morrow you will see young Eckart down."

I cried out, as much enraged at my feebleness to resist him, as in disgust of his unscrupulous tricks.

"Ay, you have not known me, Richie," said he. "I pilot you into harbour, and all you can do is just the

creaking of the vessel to me. You are in my hands. I pilot you. I have you the husband of the princess within the month. No other course is open to her. And I have the assurance that she loses nothing by it. She is yours, my son."

"She will not be. You have wrecked my last chance. You cover me with dishonour."

"You are a youngster, Richie. 'Tis the wish of her heart. Probably while you and I are talking it over, the prince is confessing that he has no escape. He has not a loophole! She came to you; you take her. I am far from withholding my admiration of her behaviour; but there it is—she came. Not consent? She is a ruined woman if she refuses!"

"Through you, through you!—through my father!"

"Have you both gone mad?"

"Try to see this," I implored him. "She will not be subjected by any threats. The very whisper of one will make her turn from me"

He interrupted. "Totally the contrary. The prince acknowledges that you are master of her affections."

"Consistently with her sense of honour and respect for us."

"Tell me of her reputation, Richie."

"You pretend that you can damage it!"

"Pretend? I pretend in the teeth of all concerned to establish her happiness and yours, and nothing human shall stop me. I have you grateful to me before

your old dad lays his head on his last pillow. And that reminds me: I surrender my town house and furniture to you. Waddy has received he word. By the way, should you hear of a good doctor for heart-disease, tell me: I have my fears for the poor soul."

He stood up, saying, "Richie, I am not like Jorian, to whom a lodging-house dinner is no dinner, and an irreparable loss, but I must have air. I go forth on a stroll."

It was impossible for me to allow it. I stopped him.

We were in the midst of a debate as to his right of personal freedom, upon the singularity of which he commented with sundry ejaculations, when Temple arrived and General Goodwin sent up his card. Temple and I left the general closeted with my father, and stood at the street-door. He had seen the princess, having, at her request, been taken to present his respects to her by Janet. How she looked, what she said, he was dull in describing; he thought her lively, though she was pale. She had mentioned my name, "kindly," he observed. And he knew, or suspected, the general to be an emissary from the prince. But he could not understand the exact nature of the complication, and plagued me with a mixture of blunt inquiries and the delicate reserve proper to him so much that I had to look elsewhere for counsel and sympathy. Janet had told him everything; still he was plunged in wonder, tempting me to think the lawyer's mind of necessity bourgeois, for the value of a sentiment seemed to have

no weight in his estimation of the case. Nor did he appear disinclined to excuse my father. Some of his remarks partly swayed me, in spite of my seeing that they were based on the supposition of an "all for love" adventure of a mad princess. They whispered a little hope, when I was adoring her passionately for being the reverse of whatever might have given hope a breath.

General Goodwin, followed by my father, came down and led me aside after I had warned Temple not to let my father elude him. The general was greatly ruffled. "Clara tells me she can rely on you," he said. "I am at the end of my arguments with that man, short of sending him to the lock-up. You will pardon me, Mr. Harry; I foresaw the scrapes in store for you, and advised you."

"You did, general," I confessed. "Will you tell me what it is Prince Ernest is in dread of?"

"A pitiable scandal, sir; and if he took my recommendation, he would find instant means of punishing the man who dares to threaten him. You know it."

I explained that I was aware of the threat, not of the degree of the prince's susceptibility; and asked him if he had seen the princess.

"I have had the honour," he replied, stiffly. "You gain nothing with her by this infamous proceeding."

I swallowed my anger, and said, "Do you accuse me, general?"

"I do not accuse you," he returned, unbendingly.

"You chose your path some ten or twelve years ago, and you must take the consequences. I foresaw it; but this I will say, I did not credit the man with his infernal cleverness. If I speak to you at all, I must speak my mind. I thought him a mere buffoon and spendthrift, flying his bar-sinister story for the sake of distinction. He has schemed up to this point successfully: he has the prince in his toils. *I* would cut through them, as I have informed Prince Ernest. I daresay different positions lead to different reasonings; the fellow appears to have a fascination over him. Your father, Mr. Harry, is guilty now—he is guilty, I reiterate, now—of a piece of iniquity that makes me ashamed to own him for a countryman."

The general shook himself erect. "Are you unable to keep him in?" he asked.

My nerves were pricking and stinging with the insults I had to listen to, and conscience's justification of them.

He repeated the question.

"I will do what I can," I said, unsatisfactorily to myself and to him, for he transposed our situations, telling me the things he would say and do in my place; things not dissimilar to those I had already said and done, only more toweringly enunciated; and for that reason they struck me as all the more hopelessly ineffectual, and made me despair.

My dumbness excited his ire. "Come," said he; "the lady is a spoilt child. She behaved foolishly;

but from your point of view you should feel bound to protect her on that very account. Do your duty, young gentleman. He is, I believe, fond of you, and if so, you have him by a chain. I tell you frankly, I hold you responsible."

His way of speaking of the princess opened an idea of the world's, in the event of her name falling into its clutches.

I said again, "I will do what I can," and sang out for Temple.

He was alone. My father had slipped from him to leave a card at the squire's hotel. General Goodwin touched Temple on the shoulder kindly, in marked contrast to his treatment of me, and wished us good-night.

Nothing had been heard of my father by Janet, but while I was sitting with her, at a late hour, his card was brought up, and a pencilled entreaty for an interview the next morning.

"That will suit grandada," Janet said. "He commissioned me before going to bed to write the same for him."

She related that the prince was in a state of undisguised distraction. From what I could comprehend— it appeared incredible — he regarded his daughter's marriage as the solution of the difficulty, the sole way out of the meshes.

"Is not that her wish?" said Temple; perhaps with a wish of his own.

"Oh, if you think a lady like the Princess Ottilia is led by her wishes!" said Janet. Her radiant perception of an ideal in her sex (the first she ever had) made her utterly contemptuous towards the less enlightened.

We appointed the next morning at half-past eleven for my father's visit.

"Not a minute later," Janet said in my ear, urgently. "Don't, don't let him move out of your sight, Harry! The princess is convinced you are not to blame."

I asked her whether she had any knowledge of the squire's designs.

"I have not, on my honour," she answered. "But I hope . . . It is so miserable to think of this disgraceful thing! She is too firm to give way. She does not blame you. I am sure I do not; only, Harry, one always feels that if one were in another's place, in a case like this, I could and would command him. I would have him obey me. One is not born to accept disgrace even from a father. I should say, 'You shall not stir, if you mean to act dishonourably.' One is justified, I am sure, in breaking a tie of relationship that involves you in dishonour. Grandada has not spoken a word to me on the subject. I catch at straws. This thing burns me! Oh, good night, Harry. I can't sleep."

"Good night," she called softly to Temple on the stairs below. I heard the poor fellow murmuring good-

night to himself in the street, and thought him happier than I. He slept at a room close to the hotel.

A note from Clara Goodwin adjured me, by her memory of the sweet, brave, gracious fellow she loved in other days, to be worthy of what I had been. The general had unnerved her reliance on me.

I sat up for my father until long past midnight. When he came his appearance reminded me of the time of his altercation with Baroness Turckems under the light of the blazing curtains: he had supped and drunk deeply, and he very soon proclaimed that I should find him invincible, which, as far as insensibility to the strongest appeals to him went, he was.

"Deny you love her, deny she loves you, deny you are one—I knot you fast!"

He had again seen Prince Ernest; so he said, declaring that the prince positively desired the marriage; would have it. "And I," he dramatized their relative situations, "consented."

After my experience of that night, I forgive men who are unmoved by displays of humour. Commonly we think it should be irresistible. His description of the thin-skinned sensitive prince striving to run and dodge for shelter from him, like a fever-patient pursued by a north-easter, accompanied by dozens of quaint similes full of his mental laughter, made my loathing all the more acute. But I had not been an uqeal match for him previous to his taking wine; it was waste of breath and heart to contend with him. I folded my

arms tight, sitting rigidly silent, and he dropped on the sofa luxuriously.

"Bed, Richie!" he waved to me. "You drink no wine, you cannot stand dissipation as I do. Bed, my dear boy! I am a god, sir, inaccessible to mortal ailments! Seriously, dear boy, I have never known an illness in my life. I have killed my hundreds of poor devils who were for imitating me. This I boast—I boast constitution. And I fear, Richie, you have none of my superhuman strength. Added to that, I know I am watched over. I ask—I have: I scheme—the tricks are in my hand! It may be the doing of my mother in heaven; there is the fact for you to reflect on. 'Stand not in my way, nor follow me too far,' would serve me for a motto admirably, and you can put it in Latin, Richie. Bed! You shall turn your scholarship to account as I do my genius in your interest. On my soul, that motto in Latin will requite me. Now to bed.'"

"No," said I. "You have got away from me once. I shall keep you in sight and hearing, if I have to lie at your door for it. You will go with me to London to-morrow. I shall treat you as a man I have to guard, and I shall not let you loose before I am quite sure of you."

"Loose!" he exclaimed, throwing up an arm and a leg.

"I mean, sir, that you shall be in my presence wherever you are, and I will take care you don't go far

and wide. It's useless to pretend astonishment. I don't argue and I don't beseech any further: I just sit on guard, as I would over a powder-cask."

My father raised himself on an elbow. "The explosion," he said, examining his watch, "occurred at about five minutes to eleven—we are advanced into the morning—last night. I received on your behalf the congratulations of friends Loftus, Alton, Segrave, and the rest, at that hour. So, my dear Richie, you are sitting on guard over the empty magazine."

I listened with a throbbing forehead, and controlled the choking in my throat, to ask him whether he had touched the newspapers.

"Ay, dear lad, I have sprung my mine in them," he replied.

"You have sent word——?"

"I have despatched a paragraph to the effect that the prince and princess have arrived to ratify the nuptial preliminaries."

"You expect it to appear this day?"

"Or else my name and influence are curiously at variance with the confidence I repose in them, Richie."

"Then I leave you to yourself," I said. "Prince Ernest knows he has to expect this statement in the papers?"

"We trumped him with that identical court-card, Richie."

"Very well. To-morrow, after we have been to my

grandfather, you and I part company for good, sir. It costs me too much."

"Dear old Richie," he laughed, gently. "And now to by-by! My blessing on you now and always."

He shut his eyes.

CHAPTER X.

AN ENCOUNTER SHOWING MY FATHER'S GENIUS IN A STRONG LIGHT.

THE morning was sultry with the first rising of the sun. I knew that Ottilia and Janet would be out. For myself, I dared not leave the house. I sat in my room, harried by the most penetrating snore which can ever have afflicted wakeful ears. It proclaimed so deep-seated a peacefulness in the bosom of the disturber, and was so arrogant, so ludicrous, and inaccessible to remonstrance, that it sounded like a renewal of our midnight altercation on the sleeper's part. Prolonged now and then beyond all bounds, it ended in the crashing blare whereof utter wakefulness cannot imagine honest sleep to be capable, but a playful melody twirled back to the regular note. He was fast asleep on the sitting-room sofa, while I walked fretting and panting. To this twinship I seemed condemned. In my heart nevertheless there was a reserve of wonderment at his apparent astuteness and resolution, and my old love for him whispered disbelief in his having disgraced me. Perhaps

it was wilful self-deception. It helped me to meet him with a better face.

We both avoided the subject of our difference for some time: he would evidently have done so altogether, and used his best and sweetest manner to divert me; but when I struck on it, asking him if he had indeed told me the truth last night, his features clouded as though with an effort of patience. To my consternation he suddenly broke away, with his arms up, puffing and stammering, stamping his feet. He would have a truce—he insisted on a truce, I understood him to exclaim, and that I was like a woman, who would and would not, and wanted a master. He raved of the gallant downrightness of the young bloods of his day, and how splendidly this one and that had compassed their ends by winning great ladies, lawfully or otherwise. For several minutes he was in a state of frenzy, appealing to his pattern youths of a bygone generation as to moral principles—stuttering, and of a dark red hue from the neck to the temples. I refrained from a scuffle of tongues. Nor did he excuse himself after he had cooled. His hand touched instinctively for his pulse, and, with a glance at the ceiling, he exclaimed, "Good Lord!" and brought me to his side. "These wigwam houses check my circulation," said he. "Let us go out—let us breakfast on board."

The open air restored him, and he told me that he had been merely oppressed by the architect of the inferior classes, whose ceiling sat on his head. My

nerves, he remarked to me, were very excitable. "You should take your wine, Richie,—you require it. Your dear mother had a low-toned nervous system." I was silent, and followed him, at once a captive and a keeper.

This day of slackened sails and a bright sleeping water kept the yachtsmen on land; there was a crowd to meet the morning boat. Foremost among those who stepped out of it was the yellow-haired Eckart, little suspecting what the sight of him signalled to me. I could scarcely greet him at all, for in him I perceived that my father had fully committed himself to his plot, and left me nothing to hope. Eckart said something of Prince Hermann. As we were walking off the pier, I saw Janet conversing with Prince Ernest, and the next minute Hermann himself was one of the group. I turned to Eckart for an explanation.

"Didn't I tell you he called at your house in London, and travelled down with me this morning!" said Eckart.

My father looked in the direction of the princes, but his face was for the moment no index. They bowed to Janet, and began talking hurriedly in the triangle of road between her hotel, the pier, and the way to the villas: passing on, and coming to a full halt, like men who are not reserving their minds. My father stept out towards them. He was met by Prince Ernest. Hermann turned his back.

It being the hour of the appointment, I delivered

Eckart over to Temple's safe-keeping, and went up to Janet. "Don't be late, Harry," she said.

I asked her if she knew the object of the meeting appointed by my grandfather.

She answered impatiently: "Do get him away from the prince." And then: "I ought to tell you the princess is well, and so on—pardon me just now: Grandada is kept waiting, and I don't like it."

Her actual dislike was to see Prince Ernest in dialogue with my father, it seemed to me; and the manner of both, which was, one would have said, intimate, anything but the manner of adversaries. Prince Ernest appeared to affect a pleasant humour; he twice, after shaking my father's hand, stepped back to him, as if to renew some impression. Their attitude declared them to be on the best of terms. Janet withdrew her attentive eyes from observing them, and threw a world of meaning into her abstracted gaze at me. My father's advance put her to flight. Yet she gave him the welcome of a high-bred young woman when he entered the drawing-room of my grandfather's hotel-suite. She was alone, and she obliged herself to accept conversation graciously. He recommended her to try the German Baths for the squire's gout, and evidently amused her with his specific probations for English persons designing to travel in company, that they should previously live together in a house with a collection of undisciplined chambermaids, a musical footman, and a mad cook: to learn to accommodate their tempers. "I would add a

touch of earthquake, Miss Ilchester, just to make sure that all the party know one another's edges before starting." This was too far a shot of nonsense for Janet, whose native disposition was to refer to lunacy, or stupidity, or trickery, whatsoever was novel to her understanding. "I, for my part," said he, "stipulate to have for comrade no man who fancies himself a born and stamped chieftain, no inveterate student of maps, and no dog with a turn for feeling himself pulled by the collar. And that reminds me you are amateur of dogs. Have you a Pomeranian boar-hound?"

"No," said Janet; "I have never even seen one."

"That high." My father raised his hand flat.

"Bigger than our Newfoundlands!"

"Without exaggeration, big as a pony. You will permit me to send you one, warranted to have passed his distemper, which can rarely be done for our human species, though here and there I venture to guarantee my man as well as my dog."

Janet interposed her thanks, declining to take the dog, but he dwelt on the dog's charms, his youth, stature, appearance, fitness, and grandeur, earnestly. I had to relieve her apprehensions by questioning where the dog was.

"In Germany," he said.

It was not improbable, nor less so that the dog was in Pomerania likewise.

The entry of my aunt Dorothy, followed by my grandfather, was silent.

"Be seated," the old man addressed us in a body, to cut short particular salutations.

My father overshadowed him with drooping shoulders.

Janet wished to know whether she was to remain.

"I like you by me always," he answered, bluff and sharp.

"We have some shopping to do," my aunt Dorothy murmured, showing she was there against her will.

"Do you shop out of London?" said my father; and for some time he succeeded in making us sit for the delusive picture of a comfortable family meeting.

My grandfather sat quite still, Janet next to him. "When you've finished, Mr. Richmond," he remarked.

"Mr. Beltham, I was telling Miss Beltham that I join in the abuse of London exactly because I love it. A paradox! she says. But we seem to be effecting a kind of insurance on the life of the things we love best by crying them down violently. You have observed it? Denounce them—they endure for ever! So I join any soul on earth in decrying our dear London. The naughty old City can beat it."

There was a clearing of throats. My aunt Dorothy's foot tapped the floor.

"But I presume you have done me the honour to invite me to this conference on a point of business, Mr. Beltham?" said my father, admonished by the hint.

"I have, sir," the squire replied.

"And I also have a point. And, in fact, it is

urgent, and with your permission, Mr. Beltham, I will lead the way."

"No, sir, if you please. I'm a short speaker, and go to it at once, and I won't detain you a second after you've answered me."

My father nodded to this, with the conciliatory comment that it was business-like.

The old man drew out his pocket-book.

"You paid a debt," he said, deliberately, "amounting to twenty-one thousand pounds to my grandson's account."

"Oh! a debt! I did, sir. Between father and boy, dad and lad; debts! but use your own terms, I pray you."

"I don't ask you where that money is now. I ask you to tell me where you got it from."

"You speak bluntly, my dear sir."

"You won't answer, then?"

"You ask the question as a family matter? I reply with alacrity, to the best of my ability: and with my hand on my heart, Mr. Beltham, let me assure you, I very heartily desire the information to be furnished to me. Or rather—why should I conceal it? The sources are irregular, but a child could toddle its way to them: you take my indication. Say that I obtained it from my friends. *My* friends, Mr. Beltham, are of the kind requiring squeezing. Government, as my chum and good comrade, Jorian DeWitt, is fond of saying, is a sponge—a thing that when you dive deep enough to

catch it gives liberal supplies, but will assuredly otherwise reverse the process by acting the part of an absorbent. I get what I get by force of arms, or I might have perished long since."

"Then you don't know where you got it from, sir?"

"Technically you are correct, sir."

"A bird didn't bring it, and you didn't find it in the belly of a fish."

"Neither of these prodigies. They have occurred in books I am bound to believe; they did *not* happen to me."

"You swear to me you don't know the man, woman, or committee, who gave you that sum?"

"I do not know, Mr. Beltham. In an extraordinary history, extraordinary circumstances! I have experienced so many that I am surprised at nothing."

"You suppose you got it from some fool?"

"Oh! if you choose to indict Government collectively?"

"You pretend you got it from Government?"

"I am termed a pretender by some, Mr. Beltham. The facts are these: I promised to refund the money, and I fulfilled the promise. There you have the only answer I can make to you. Now to my own affair. I come to request you to demand the hand of the Princess Eppenwelzen-Sarkeld on behalf of my son Harry, your grandson; and I possess the assurance of the prince, her father, that it will be granted. Doubtless you, sir,

are of as old a blood as the prince himself. You will acknowledge that the honour brought to the family by an hereditary princess is considerable: it is something. I am prepared to accompany you to his highness, or not, as you please: his English is of a faltering character. Still it is but a question of dotation, and a selection from one of two monosyllables."

Janet shook her dress.

The squire replied: "We'll take that up presently. I haven't quite done. Will you tell me what agent paid you the sum of money?"

"The usual agent—a solicitor, Mr. Beltham; a gentleman whose business lay amongst the aristocracy; he is defunct; and a very worthy old gentleman he was, with a remarkable store of anecdotes of his patrons, very discreetly told: for you never heard a name from him."

"You took him for an agent of Government, did you! why?"

"To condense a long story, sir, the kernel of the matter is, that almost from the hour I began to stir for the purpose of claiming my rights—which are transparent enough—this old gentleman—certainly from no sinister motive, I may presume—commenced the payment of an annuity; not sufficient for my necessities, possibly, but warrant of an agreeable sort for encouraging my expectations; although, oddly, this excellent old Mr. Bannerbridge invariably served up the dish in a sauce that did not agree with it, by advising me of the

wish of the donator that I should abandon my case. I consequently, in common with my friends, performed a little early lesson in arithmetic, and we came to the one conclusion open to reflective minds—namely, that I was feared."

My aunt Dorothy looked up for the first time.

"Janet and I have some purchases to make," she said.

The squire signified sharply that she must remain where she was.

"I think aunty wants fresh air; she had a headache last night," said Janet.

I suggested that, as my presence did not seem to be required, I could take her on my arm for a walk to the pier-head.

Her face was burning; she would gladly have gone out, but the squire refused to permit it, and she nodded over her crossed hands, saying that she was in no hurry.

"Ha! I am," quoth he.

"Dear Miss Beltham!" my father ejaculated, solicitously.

"Here, sir, oblige me by attending to me," cried the squire, fuming and blinking. "I sent for you on a piece of business. You got this money through a gentleman, a solicitor, named Bannerbridge, did you?"

"His name was Bannerbridge, Mr. Beltham."

"Dorothy, you knew a Mr. Bannerbridge?"

She faltered: "I knew him. Harry was lost in the streets of London when he was a little fellow,

and the Mr. Bannerbridge I knew found him and took him to his house, and was very kind to him."

"What was his Christian name?"

I gave them: "Charles Adolphus."

"The identical person!" exclaimed my father.

"Oh! you admit it," said the squire. "Ever seen him since the time Harry was lost, Dorothy?"

"Yes," she answered. "I have heard he is dead."

"Did you see him shortly before his death?"

"I happened to see him a short time before."

"He was your man of business, was he?"

"For such little business as I had to do."

"You were sure you could trust him, eh?"

"Yes."

My aunt Dorothy breathed deeply.

"By God, ma'am, you're a truthful woman!"

The old man gave her a glare of admiration.

It was now my turn to undergo examination, and summoned by his apostrophe to meet his eyes, I could appreciate the hardness of the head I had to deal with.

"Harry, I beg your pardon beforehand; I want to get at facts; I must ask you what you know about where the money came from?"

I spoke of my attempts to discover the whence and wherefore of it.

"Government? eh?" he sneered.

"I really can't judge whether it came from that quarter," said I.

"What do you think?—think it likely?"

I thought it unlikely, and yet likelier than that it should have come from an individual.

"Then you don't suspect any particular person of having sent it in the nick of time, Harry Richmond?"

I replied: "No, sir; unless you force me to suspect you."

He jumped in his chair, astounded and wrathful, confounded me for insinuating that he was a Bedlamite, and demanded the impudent reason of my suspecting him to have been guilty of the infernal folly.

I had but the reason to instance that he was rich and kind at heart.

"Rich! kind!" he bellowed. "Just excuse me—I must ask for the purpose of my inquiry;—there, tell me, how much do you believe you've got of that money remaining? None o' that Peterborough style of counting in the back of your pate. Say!"

There was a dreadful silence.

My father leaned persuasively forward.

"Mr. Beltham, I crave permission to take up the word. Allow me to remind you of the prize Harry has won. The prince awaits you to bestow on him the hand of his daughter——"

"Out with it, Harry," shouted the squire.

"Not to mention Harry's seat in Parliament," my father resumed, "he has a princess to wife, indubitably one of the most enviable positions in the country! It is unnecessary to count on future honours; they may be alluded to. In truth, sir, we make him the first

man in the country. Not necessarily premier: you take my meaning:—he possesses the combination of social influence and standing with political achievements, and rank and riches in addition——"

"I'm speaking to my grandson, sir," the squire rejoined, shaking himself like a man rained on. "I'm waiting for a plain answer, and no lie. You've already confessed as much as that the money you told me on your honour you put out to interest;—psh!—for my grandson was smoke. Now let's hear him."

My father called out: "I claim a hearing! The money you speak of *was* put out to the very highest interest. You have your grandson in Parliament, largely acquainted with the principal members of society, husband of an hereditary princess! You have only at this moment to propose for her hand. I guarantee it to you. With that money I have won him everything. Not that I would intimate to you that princesses are purchaseable. The point is, I knew how to employ it."

"In two months' time, the money in the funds in the boy's name—you told me that."

"You had it in the funds in Harry Richmond's name, sir."

"Well, sir, I'm asking him whether it's in the funds now."

"Oh! Mr. Beltham."

"What answer's that?"

The squire was really confused by my father's interruption, and lost sight of me.

"I ask where it came from: I ask whether it's squandered?" he continued.

"Mr. Beltham, I reply that you have only to ask for it to have it; do so immediately."

"What's he saying?" cried the baffled old man.

"I give you a thousand times the equivalent of the money, Mr. Beltham."

"Is the money there?"

"The lady is here."

"I said money, sir."

"A priceless honour and treasure, I say emphatically."

My grandfather's brows and mouth were gathering for storm. Janet touched his knee.

"Where the devil your understanding truckles, if you have any, I don't know," he muttered. "What the deuce—lady got to do with money!"

"Oh!" my father laughed lightly, "customarily the alliance is, they say, as close as matrimony. Pardon me. To speak with becoming seriousness, Mr. Beltham, it was duly imperative that our son should be known in society, should be, you will apprehend me, advanced in station, which I had to do through the ordinary political channel. There could not be a considerable expenditure for such a purpose."

"In balls, and dinners!"

"In everything that builds a young gentleman's repute."

"You swear to me you gave your balls and dinners, and the lot, for Harry Richmond's sake?"

"On my veracity, I did, sir!"

"Please don't talk like a mountebank. I don't want any of your roundabout words for truth; we're not writing a Bible essay. I try my best to be civil."

My father beamed on him.

"I guarantee you succeed, sir. Nothing on earth can a man be so absolutely sure of as to succeed in civility, if he honestly tries at it. Jorian DeWitt,—by the way, you may not know him—an esteemed old friend of mine, says—that is, he said once—to a tolerably impudent fellow whom he had disconcerted with a capital retort, 'You may try to be a gentleman, and blunder at it, but if you will only try to be his humble servant we are certain to establish a common footing.' Jorian, let me tell you, is a wit worthy of our glorious old days."

My grandfather eased his heart with a plunging breath. "Well, sir, I didn't ask you here for your opinion or your friend's, and I don't care for modern wit."

"Nor I, Mr. Beltham, nor I! It has the reek of stable straw. We are of one mind on that subject. The thing slouches, it sprawls. It—to quote Jorian once more—is like a dirty, idle, little stupid boy who cannot learn his lesson and plays the fool with the alphabet. You smile, Miss Ilchester: you would appreciate Jorian. Modern wit is emphatically degenerate. It has no scintillation, neither thrust nor parry. I compare it to boxing, as opposed to the more beautiful science of fencing."

"Well, sir, I don't want to hear your comparisons," growled the squire, much oppressed. "Stop a minute. . ."

"Half a minute to me, sir," said my father, with a glowing reminiscence of Jorian DeWitt, which was almost too much for the combustible old man, even under Janet's admonition.

My aunt Dorothy moved her head slightly towards my father, looking on the floor, and he at once drew in.

"Mr. Beltham, I attend to you submissively."

"You do? Then tell me what brought this princess to England?"

"The conviction that Harry had accomplished his oath to mount to an eminence in his country, and had made the step she is about to take less, I will say, precipitous: though I personally decline to admit a pointed inferiority."

"You wrote her a letter."

"That, containing the news of the attack on him and his desperate illness, was the finishing touch to the noble lady's passion."

"Attack? I know nothing about an attack. You wrote her a letter and wrote her a lie. You said he was dying."

"I had the boy inanimate on my breast when I despatched the epistle."

"You said he had only a few days to live."

"So in my affliction I feared."

"Will you swear you didn't write that letter with the intention of drawing her over here to have her in your power, so that you might threaten you'd blow on her reputation if she or her father held out against you and all didn't go as you fished for it?"

My father raised his head proudly.

"I divide your query into two parts. I wrote, sir, to bring her to his side. I did not write with any intention to threaten."

"You've done it, though."

"I have done this," said my father, toweringly: "I have used the power placed in my hands by Providence to overcome the hesitations of a gentleman whose illustrious rank predisposes him to sacrifice his daughter's happiness to his pride of birth and station. Can any one confute me when I assert that the princess loves Harry Richmond?"

I walked abruptly to one of the windows, hearing a pitiable wrangling on the theme. My grandfather vowed she had grown wiser, my father protested that she was willing and anxious; Janet was appealed to. In a strangely-sounding underbreath, she said, "The princess does not wish it."

"You hear that, Mr. Richmond?" cried the squire.

He returned: "Can Miss Ilchester say that the Princess Ottilia does not passionately love my son Harry Richmond? The circumstances warrant me in beseeching a direct answer."

She uttered: "No."

I looked at her; she at me.

"You can conduct a case, Richmond," the squire remarked.

My father rose to his feet. "I can conduct my son to happiness and greatness, my dear sir; but to some extent I require your grandfatherly assistance; and I urge you now to present your respects to the prince and princess, and judge yourself of his Highness's disposition for the match. I assure you in advance that he welcomes the proposal."

"I do not believe it," said Janet, rising.

My aunt Dorothy followed her example, saying; "In justice to Harry the proposal should be made. At least it will settle this dispute."

Janet stared at her, and the squire threw his head back with an amazed interjection.

"What! You're for it now? Why, at breakfast you were all t'other way! You didn't want this meeting because you pooh-poohed the match."

"I do think you should go," she answered. "You have given Harry your promise, and if he empowers you, it is right to make the proposal, and immediately, I think."

She spoke feverishly, with an unsweet expression of face, that seemed to me to indicate vexedness at the squire's treatment of my father.

"Harry," she asked me in a very earnest fashion, "is it your desire? Tell your grandfather that it is, and that you want to know your fate. Why should there be

any dispute on a fact that can be ascertained by crossing a street? Surely it is trifling."

Janet stooped to whisper in the squire's ear.

He caught the shock of unexpected intelligence apparently; faced about, gazed up, and cried: "You too! But I haven't done here. I've got to cross-examine. . . . Pretend, do you mean? Pretend I'm ready to go? I can release this prince just as well here as there."

Janet laughed faintly.

"I should advise your going, grandada."

"*You* a weathercock woman!" he reproached her, quite mystified, and fell to rubbing his head. "Suppose I go to be snubbed?"

"The prince is a gentleman, grandada. Come with me. We will go alone. You can relieve the prince, and protect him."

My father nodded: "I approve."

"And grandada—but it will not so much matter if we are alone, though," Janet said.

"Speak out."

"See the princess as well; she must be present."

"I leave it to you," he said, crestfallen.

Janet pressed my aunt Dorothy's hand.

"Aunty, you were right, you are always right. This state of suspense is bad all round, and it is infinitely worse for the prince and princess."

My aunt Dorothy accepted the eulogy with a singular trembling wrinkle of the forehead.

She evidently understood that Janet had seen her wish to get released.

For my part, I shared my grandfather's stupefaction at their unaccountable changes. It appeared almost as of my father had won them over to baffle him. The old man tried to insist on their sitting down again, but Janet perseveringly smiled and smiled until he stood up. She spoke to him softly. He was one black frown; displeased with her; obedient, however.

Too soon after, I had the key to the enigmatical scene. At the moment I was contemptuous of riddles, and heard with idle ears Janet's promptings to him and his replies. "It would be so much better to settle it here," he said. She urged that it could not be settled here without the whole burden and responsibility falling upon him.

"Exactly," interposed my father triumphing.

Dorothy Beltham came to my side, and said, as if speaking to herself, while she gazed out of window: "If a refusal, it should come from the prince." She dropped her voice: "The money has not been spent? Has it? Has any part of it been spent? Are you sure you have more than three parts of it?"

Now, that she should be possessed by the spirit of parsimony on my behalf at such a time as this, was to my conception insanely comical, and her manner of expressing it was too much for me. I kept my laughter under to hear her continue: "What numbers are flocking on the pier! and there is no music yet. Tell me, Harry,

that the money is all safe; nearly all! It is important to know; you promised economy."

"Music did you speak of, Miss Beltham?"

My father bowed to her gallantly. "I chanced to overhear you. My private band performs to the public at midday."

She was obliged to smile to excuse his interruption.

"What's that? whose band?" said the squire, bursting out of Janet's hand. "A private band?"

Janet had a difficulty in resuming her command of him. The mention of the private band made him very restive.

"I'm not acting on my own judgment at all in going to these foreign people," he said to Janet. "Why go? I can have it out here and an end to it, without bothering them and their interpreters."

He sung out to me: "Harry, do you want me to go through this form for you? —mn'd unpleasant!"

My aunt Dorothy whispered in my ear: "Yes! yes!"

"I feel tricked!" he muttered, and did not wait for me to reply before he was again questioning my aunt Dorothy concerning Mr. Bannerbridge, and my father as to "that sum of money." But his method of interrogation was confused and pointless. The drift of it was totally obscure.

"I'm off my head to-day," he said to Janet, with a side-shot of his eye at my father.

"You waste time and trouble, grandada," said she.

He vowed that he was being bewildered, bothered by us all; and I thought I had never seen him so far below his level of energy; but I had not seen him condescend to put himself upon a moderately fair footing with my father. The truth was, that Janet had rigorously schooled him to bridle his temper, and he was no match for the voluble easy man without the freest play of his tongue.

"This prince!" he kept ejaculating.

"Won't you understand, grandada, that you relieve him, and make things clear by going?" Janet said.

He begged her fretfully not to be impatient, and hinted that she and he might be acting the part of dupes and was for pursuing his inauspicious cross-examination in spite of his blundering, and the "Where am I now?" which pulled him up. My father, either talking to my aunt Dorothy, to Janet, or to me, on ephemeral topics, scarcely noticed him, except when he was questioned, and looked secure of success in the highest degree consistent with perfect calmness.

"So you say you tell me to go, do you?" the squire called to me. "Be good enough to stay here and wait. I don't see that anything's gained by my going: it's damned hard on me, having to go to a man whose language I don't know, and he don't know mine, on a business we're all of us in a muddle about. I'll do it if it's right. You're sure?"

He glanced at Janet. She nodded.

I was looking for this quaint and, to me, incompre-

hensible interlude to commence with the departure of the squire and Janet, when a card was handed in by one of the hotel-waiters.

"Another prince!" cried the squire. "These Germans seem to grow princes like potatoes—dozens to a root! Who's the card for? Ask him to walk up. Show him into a quiet room. Does he speak English?"

"Does Prince Hermann of—I can't pronounce the name of the place—speak English, Harry?" Janet asked me.

"As well as you or I," said I, losing my inattention all at once with a mad leap of the heart.

Hermann's presence gave light, fire, and colour to the scene in which my destiny had been wavering from hand to hand without much more than amusedly interesting me, for I was sure that I had lost Ottilia; I knew that too well, and worse could not happen. I had besides lost other things that used to sustain me, and being reckless, I was contemptuous, and listened to the talk about money with sublime indifference to the subject: with an attitude, too, I daresay. But Hermann's name revived my torment. Why had he come? to persuade the squire to control my father? Nothing but that would suffer itself to be suggested, though conjectures lying in shadow underneath pressed ominously on my mind.

My father had no doubts.

"A word to you, Mr. Beltham, before you go to Prince Hermann. He is an emissary, we treat him

with courtesy, and if he comes to diplomatize we of course give a patient hearing. I have only to observe in the most emphatic manner possible that I do not retract one step. I will have this marriage: I have spoken! It rests with Prince Ernest."

The squire threw a hasty glare of his eyes back as he was hobbling on Janet's arm. She stopped short, and replied for him.

"Mr. Beltham will speak for himself, in his own name. We are not concerned in any unworthy treatment of Prince Ernest. We protest against it."

"Dear young lady!" said my father graciously, "I meet you frankly. Now tell me. I know you a gallant horsewoman: if you had lassoed the noble horse of the desert would you let him run loose because of his remonstrating? Side with me, I entreat you! My son is my first thought. The pride of princes and wild horses you will find wonderfully similar, especially in the way they take their taming when once they feel they are positively caught. We show him we have him fast —he falls into our paces on the spot! For Harry's sake, for the princess's, I beg you exert your universally-deservedly acknowedged influence. Even now—and you frown on me!—I cannot find it in my heart to wish you the sweet and admirable woman of the world you are destined to be, though you would comprehend me and applaud me, for I could not—no, not to win your favourable opinion!—consent that you should be robbed of a single ray of your fresh maidenly youth. If you must

misjudge me, I submit. It is the price I pay for seeing you young and lovely. Prince Ernest is, credit me, not unworthily treated by me, if life is a battle, and the prize of it to the general's head. I implore you"—he lured her with the dimple of a lurking smile—"do not seriously blame your afflicted senior, if we are to differ. I am vastly your elder: you instil the doubt whether I am by as much the wiser of the two; but the father of Harry Richmond claims to know best what will ensure his boy's felicity. Is he rash? Pronounce me guilty of an excessive anxiety for my son's welfare; say that I am too old to read the world with the accuracy of a youthful intelligence; call me indiscreet: stigmatize me unlucky; the severest sentence a judge"—he bowed to her deferentially—"can utter; only do not cast a gaze of rebuke on me because my labour is for my son, my utmost devotion. And we know, Miss Ilchester, that the princess honours him with her love. I protest in all candour, I treat love as love; not as a weight in the scale: it is the heavenly power which dispenses with weighing! its ascendency. . . ."

The squire could endure no more, and happily so, for my father was losing his remarkably moderated tone, and threatening polysyllables. He had followed Janet, step for step, at a measured distance, drooping towards her with his winningest air, while the old man pulled at her arm to get her out of hearing of the obnoxious flatterer. She kept her long head in profile, trying creditably not to appear discourteous to one who

addressed her by showing an open ear, until the final bolt made by the frenzied old man dragged her through the doorway. His neck was shortened behind his collar as though he shrugged from the blast of a bad wind. I believe that, on the whole, Janet was pleased. I will wager that, left to herself, she would have been drawn into an answer, if not an argument. Nothing would have made her resolution swerve, I admit.

They had not been out of the room three seconds when my aunt Dorothy was called to join them. She had found time to say that she hoped the money was intact.

CHAPTER XI.

STRANGE REVELATIONS, AND MY GRANDFATHER HAS HIS LAST INNINGS.

My father and I stood at different windows, observing the unconcerned people below.

"Did you scheme to bring Prince Hermann over here as well?" I asked him.

He replied, laughing: "I really am not the wonderful wizard you think me, Richie. I left Prince Ernest's address as mine with Waddy in case the Frau Feld-Marschall should take it into her head to come. Further than that you must question Providence, which I humbly thank for its unfailing support, down to unexpected trifles. Only this—to you and to all of them: nothing bends me. I will not be robbed of the fruit of a life-time."

"Supposing I refuse?"

"You refuse, Richie, to restore the princess her character and the prince his serenity of mind at their urgent supplication? I am utterly unable to suppose it. You are married in the papers this morning. I

grieve to say that the position of Prince Hermann is supremely ridiculous. I am bound to add he is a bold boy. It requires courage in one of the pretenders to the hand of the princess to undertake the office of intercessor, for he must know—the man must know in his heart that he is doing her no kindness. He does not appeal to me, you see. I have shown that my arrangements are unalterable. What he will make of your grandad! . . . Why on earth he should have been sent to—of all men in the world—your grandad, Richie!"

I was invited to sympathetic smiles of shrewd amusement.

He caught sight of friends, and threw up the window, saluting them.

The squire returned with my aunt Dorothy and Janet to behold the detested man communicating with the outer world from his own rooms. He shouted, unceremoniously, "Shut that window!" and it was easy to see that he had come back heavily armed for the offensive. "Here, Mr. Richmond, I don't want all men to know you're in my apartments."

"I forgot, sir, temporarily," said my father, "I had vacated the rooms for your convenience—most readily be assured."

An explanation on the subject of the rooms ensued between the old man and the ladies;—it did not improve his temper.

His sense of breeding, nevertheless, forced him to

remark, "I can't thank you, sir, for putting me under an obligation I should never have incurred myself."

"Oh, I was happy to be of use to the ladies, Mr. Beltham, and require no small coin of exchange," my father responded, with the flourish of a pacifying hand. "I have just heard from a posse of friends that the marriage is signalled in this morning's papers —numberless congratulations, I need not observe."

"No, don't," said the squire. "Nobody'll understand them here, and I needn't ask you to sit down, because I don't want you to stop. I'll soon have done now; the game's played. Here, Harry, quick; has all that money been spent—no offence to you, but as a matter of business?"

"Not all, sir," I was able to say.

"Half?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Three parts?"

"It may be,"

"And liabilities besides?"

"There are some."

"You're not a liar. That'll do for you."

He turned to my aunt: her eyes had shut.

"Dorothy, you've sold out twenty-five thousand pounds' worth of stock. You're a truthful woman, as I said, and so I won't treat you like a witness in a box. You gave it to Harry to help him out of his scrape. Why, short of staring lunacy, did you pass it through the hands of this man? He sweated his thousands out

of it at the start. Why did you make a secret of it to make the man think his nonsense?—Ma'am, behave like a lady and my daughter," he cried, fronting her, for the sudden and blunt attack had slackened her nerves; she moved as though to escape, and was bewildered. I stood overwhelmed. No wonder she had attempted to break up the scene.

"Tell me your object, Dorothy Beltham, in passing the money through the hands of this man? Were you for helping him to be a man of his word? Help the boy—that I understand. However, you were mistress of your money! I've no right to complain, if you will go spending a fortune to whitewash the blackamoor! Well, it's your own, you'll say! So it is: so's your character!"

The egregious mildness of these interjections could not long be preserved.

"You deceived me, ma'am. You wouldn't build schoolhouses, you couldn't subscribe to charities, you acted parsimony, to pamper a scamp and his young scholar! You went to London—you did it in cool blood; you went to your stockbroker, and from the stockbroker to the bank, and you sold out stock to fling away this big sum. I went to the bank on business, and the books were turned over for my name, and there at 'Beltham' I saw quite by chance the cross of the pen, and I saw your folly, ma'am; I saw it all in a shot. I went to the bank on my own business, mind that. Ha! you know me by this time; I loathe

spying: the thing jumped out of the book; I couldn't help seeing. Now I don't reckon how many positive fools go to make one superlative humbug; you're one of the lot, and I've learnt it."

My father airily begged leave to say: "As to positive and superlative, Mr. Beltham, the three degrees of comparison are no longer of service except to the trader. I do not consider them to exist for ladies. Your positive is always particularly open to dispute, and I venture to assert I cap you your superlative ten times over."

He talked the stuff for a diversion, presenting in the midst of us an incongruous image of smiles that filled me with I knew not what feelings of angry alienation, until I was somewhat appeased by the idea that he had not apprehended the nature of the words just spoken.

It seemed incredible, yet it was true; it was proved to be so to me by his pricking his ears and his attentive look at the mention of the word prepossessing him in relation to the money: Government.

The squire said something of Government to my aunt Dorothy, with sarcastical emphasis.

As the observation was unnecessary, and was wantonly thrown in by him, she seized on it to escape from her compromising silence: "I know nothing of Government or its ways."

She murmured further, and looked at Janet, who came to her aid, saying: "Grandada, we've had enough talk of money, money! All is done that you wanted done. Stocks, Shares, Banks—we've gone through them

all. Please finish! Please, do. You have only to state what you have heard from Prince Hermann."

Janet gazed in the direction of my father, carefully avoiding my eyes, but evidently anxious to shield my persecuted aunty.

"Speaking of Stocks and Shares, Miss Ilchester," said my father, "I myself would as soon think of walking into a field of scytheblades in full activity as of dabbling in them. One of the few instances I remember of our Jorian stooping to a pun, is upon the contango: ingenious truly, but objectionable, because a pun. I shall not be guilty of repeating it. 'The stock-market is the national snapdragon bowl,' he says, and is very amusing upon the Jews; whether quite fairly, Mr. Beltham knows better than I, on my honour."

He appealed lightly to the squire, for thus he danced on the crater's brink, and had for answer,—

"You're a cool scoundrel, Richmond."

"I choose to respect you, rather in spite of yourself, I fear, sir," said my father, bracing up.

"Did you hear my conversation with my daughter?"

"I heard, if I may say so, the lion taking his share of it."

"All roaring to you, was it?"

"Mr. Beltham, we have our little peculiarities; I am accustomed to think of a steam-vent when I hear you indulging in a sentence of unusual length, and I hope it is for our good, as I thoroughly believe it is for yours, that you should deliver yourself freely."

"So you tell me; like a stage lacquey!" muttered the old man, with surprising art in caricaturing a weakness in my father's bearing, of which I was cruelly conscious, though his enunciation was flowing. He lost his naturalness through forcing for ease in the teeth of insult.

"Grandada, aunty and I will leave you," said Janet, waxing importunate.

"When I've done," said he, facing his victim savagely. "The fellow pretends he didn't understand. She's here to corroborate. Richmond, there, my daughter, Dorothy Beltham, there's the last of your fools and dupes. She's a truthful woman, I'll own, and she'll contradict me if what I say is not the fact. That twenty-five thousand from 'Government' came out of her estate."

"Out of——?"

"Out of——be damned, sir! She's the person who paid it."

"If the 'damns' have set up, you may as well let the ladies go," said I.

He snapped at me like a rabid dog in career.

"She's the person—one of your petticoat 'Government'—who paid—do you hear me, Richmond?—the money to help you to keep your word: to help you to give your balls and dinners, too. She—I won't say she told you, and you knew it—she paid it. She sent it through her Mr. Bannerbridge. Do you understand now? *You* had it from *her*. My God! look at the fellow!"

A dreadful gape of stupefaction had usurped the smiles on my father's countenance; his eyes rolled over, he tried to articulate, and was indeed a spectacle for an enemy. His convulsed frame rocked the syllables, as with a groan, unpleasant to hear, he called on my aunt Dorothy by successive stammering apostrophes to explain, spreading his hands wide. He called out her Christian name. Her face was bloodless.

"Address my daughter respectfully, sir, will you! I won't have your infernal familiarities!" roared the squire.

"He is my brother-in-law," said Dorothy, reposing on the courage of her blood, now that the worst had been spoken. "Forgive me, Mr. Richmond, for having secretly induced you to accept the loan from me."

"Loan!" interjected the squire. "They fell upon it like a pair of kites. You'll find the last ghost of a bone of your loan in a bill, and well picked. They've been doing their bills: I've heard that."

My father touched the points of his fingers on his forehead, straining to think, too theatrically, but in hard earnest, I believe. He seemed to be rising on tiptoe.

"Oh, madam! Dear lady! my friend! Dorothy, my sister! Better a thousand times that I had married, though I shrank from a heartless union! This money? —it is not——"

The old man broke in: "Are you going to be a damned low vulgar comedian and tale of a trumpet up

to the end, you Richmond? Don't think you'll gain anything by standing there as if you were jumping your trunk from a shark. Come, sir, you're in a gentleman's rooms; don't pitch your voice like a young jackanapes blowing into a horn. Your gasps and your spasms, and howl of a yawning brute! Keep your menagerie performances for your pantomime audiences. What are you meaning? Do you pretend you're astonished? She's not the first fool of a woman whose money you've devoured, with your 'Madam,' and 'My dear' and mouthing and elbowing your comedy tricks; your gabble of 'Government' protection, and scandalous advertisements of the by-blow of a star-coated rapscallion. If you've a recollection of the man in you, show your back, and be off, say you've fought against odds—I don't doubt you have, counting the constables—and own you're a villain: plead guilty, and be off, and be silent, and do no more harm. Is it 'Government' still?"

My aunt Dorothy had come round to me. She clutched my arm to restrain me from speaking, whispering: "Harry, you can't save him. Think of yonr own head."

She made me irresolute, and I was too late to check my father from falling into the trap.

"Oh! Mr. Beltham," he said, "you are hard, sir. I put it to you: had you been in receipt of a secret subsidy from Government for a long course of years——"

"How long?" the squire interrupted.

Prompt though he would have been to dismiss the

hateful person, he was not, one could see, displeased to use the whip upon so excitable and responsive a frame. He seemed to me to be basely guilty of leading his victim on to expose himself further.

"'There's no necessity for 'how long,'" I said.

The old man kept the question on his face.

My father reflected.

"I have to hit my memory, I am shattered, sir. I say, you would be justified, amply justified——"

"How long?" was reiterated.

"I can at least date it from the period of my marriage."

"From the date when your scoundrelism first touches my family that's to say! So, 'Government' agreed to give you a stipend to support your wife!"

"Mr. Beltham, I breathe with difficulty. It was at that period, on the death of a nobleman interested in restraining me—I was his debtor for kindnesses. . . . my head is whirling! I say, at that period, upon the recommendation of friends of high standing, I began to agitate for the restitution of my rights. From infancy——"

"To the deuce, your infancy! I know too much about your age. Just hark, you Richmond! none of your 'I was a child' to provoke compassion from women. I mean to knock you down and make you incapable of hurting these poor foreign people you trapped. They defy you, and I'll do my best to draw

your teeth. Now for the annuity. You want one to believe you thought you frightened 'Government,' eh?"

"Annual proof was afforded me, sir."

"Oh! annual! through Mr. Charles Adolphus Bannerbridge, deceased!"

Janet stepped up to my aunt Dorothy to persuade her to leave the room, but she declined, and hung by me, to keep me out of danger, as she hoped, and she prompted me with a guarding nervous squeeze of her hand on my arm to answer temperately when I was questioned: "Harry, do you suspect Government paid that annuity?"

"Not now, certainly."

"Tell the man who 'tis you suspect."

My aunt Dorothy said: "Harry is not bound to mention his suspicions."

"Tell him yourself, then."

"Does it matter——?"

"Yes, it matters. I'll break every plank he walks on, and strip him stark till he flops down shivering into his slough—a convicted common swindler, with his dinners and balls and his private bands! Richmond, you killed one of my daughters; t'other fed you, through her agent, this Mr. Charles Adolphus Bannerbridge, from about the date of your snaring my poor girl and carrying her off behind your postilions—your trotting undertakers!—and the hours of her life reckoned in milestones. She's here to contradict me, if she can.

Dorothy Beltham was your 'Government' that paid the annuity."

I took Dorothy Beltham into my arms. She was trembling excessively, yet found time to say: "Bear up, dearest; keep still." All I thought and felt foundered in tears.

For a while I heard little distinctly of the tremendous tirade which the vindictive old man, rendered thrice venomous by the immobility of the petrified large figure opposed to him, poured forth. My poor father did not speak because he could not; his arms drooped; he reminded me of the figure he had sketched to Temple of the man under the house-spout, he looked so resigned to his drenching: and such was the torrent of attack, with its free play of thunder and lightning in the form of oaths, epithets, short and sharp comparisons, bitter home thrusts and most vehement imprecatory denunciations, that our protesting voices quailed. Janet plucked at my aunt Dorothy's dress to bear her away.

"I can't leave my father," I said.

"Nor I you, dear," said the tender woman; and so we remained to be scourged by this tongue of incarnate rage.

"You pensioner of a silly country spinster!" sounded like a return to mildness. My father's chest heaved up.

I took advantage of the lull to make myself heard: I did but heap fuel on fire, though the old man's splenetic impetus had partly abated.

"You Richmond! do you hear him? he swears he's your son, and asks to be tied to the stake beside you. Disown him, and I'll pay you money and thank you. I'll thank my God for anything instead of your foul blood in the family. You married the boy's mother to craze and kill her, and guttle her property. You waited for the boy to come of age to swallow what was settled on him. You wait for me to lie in my coffin to pounce on the strong-box you think me the fool to toss to a young donkey ready to ruin all his belongings for you! For nine-and-twenty years you've sucked the veins of my family, and struck through my house like a rotting-disease. Nine-and-twenty years ago you gave a singing-lesson in my house: the pest has been in it ever since! You breed vermin in the brain, to think of you! Your wife, your son, your dupes, every soul that touches you, mildews from a blight! You were born of ropery, and you go at it straight, like a webfoot to water. What's your boast?—your mother's disgrace! You shame your mother. Your whole life's a ballad o' bastardy. You cry up the woman's infamy to hook at a father. You swell and strut on her pickings. You're a cock forced from the smoke of the dunghill! You shame your mother, damned adventurer! You train your boy for a swindler after your own pattern; you twirl him in your curst harlequinade to a damnation as sure as your own. The day you crossed my threshold the devils danced on their flooring. I've never seen the sun shine fair on me after it. With your guitar under the win-

dows, of moonlight nights! your Spanish fopperies and trickeries! your French phrases and toeings! I was touched by a leper. You set your traps for both my girls: you caught the brown one first, did you, and flung her second for t'other, and drove a tandem of 'em to live the spangled hog you are; and down went the mother of the boy to the place she liked better, and my other girl here—the one you cheated for her salvation—you tried to cajole her from home and me, to send her the same way down. She stuck to decency. Good Lord! you threatened to hang yourself, guitar and all. But her purse served your turn. For why? You're a leech. I speak before ladies or I'd rip your town-life to shreds. Your cause! your romantic history! your fine figure! every inch of you's notched with villany! You fasten on every moneyed woman that comes in your way. You've outdone Herod in murdering the innocents, for he didn't feed on 'em and they've made you fat. One thing I'll say of you: you look the beastly thing you set yourself up for. The kindest blow to you's to call you impostor."

He paused, but his inordinate passion of speech was unsated: his white lips hung loose for another eruption.

I broke from my aunt Dorothy to cross over to my father, saying on the way: "We've heard enough, sir. You forget the cardinal point of invective, which is, not to create sympathy for the person you assail."

"Oh! you come in with your infernal fine language,

do you!" the old man thundered at me. "I'll just tell you at once, young fellow——"

My aunt Dorothy supplicated his attention. "One error I must correct." Her voice issued from a contracted throat, and was painfully thin and straining, as though the will to speak did violence to her weaker nature. "My sister loved Mr. Richmond. It was to save her life, because I believed she loved him much and would have died, that Mr. Richmond—in pity—offered her his hand, at my wish:" she bent her head: "at my cost. It was done for me. I wished it; he obeyed me. No blame——" her dear mouth faltered. "I am to be accused, if anybody."

She added more firmly: "My money would have been his. I hoped to spare his feelings, I beg his forgiveness now, by devoting some of it, unknown to him, to assist him. That was chiefly to please myself, I see, and I am punished."

"Well, ma'am," said the squire, calm at white heat; "a fool's confession ought to be heard out to the end? What about the twenty-five thousand?"

"I hoped to help my Harry."

"Why didn't you do it openly?"

She breathed audible long breaths before she could summon courage to say: "His father was going to make an irreparable sacrifice. I feared that if he knew this money came from me he would reject it, and persist."

Had she disliked the idea of my father's marrying?

The old man pounced on the word sacrifice. "What sacrifice, ma'am? What's the sacrifice?"

I perceived that she could not without anguish, and perhaps peril of a further exposure, bring herself to speak, and explained: "It relates to my having tried to persuade my father to marry a very wealthy lady, so that he might produce the money on the day appointed. Rail at me, sir, as much as you like. If you can't understand the circumstances without a chapter of statements, I'm sorry for you. A great deal is due to you, I know; but I can't pay a jot of it while you go on rating my father like a madman. A madman? it's rather a compliment to Bedlam."

"Harry!" either my aunt or Janet breathed a warning.

I replied that I was past mincing phrases. The folly of giving the tongue an airing was upon me: I was in fact invited to continue, and animated to do it thoroughly, by the old man's expression of face, which was that of one who says, "I give you rope," and I dealt him a liberal amount of stock irony not worth repeating; things that any cultivated man in anger can drill and sting the Bœotian with, under the delusion that he has not lost a particle of his self-command because of his coolness. I spoke very deliberately, and therefore supposed that the words of composure were those of prudent sense. The error was manifest. The women saw it. One who has indulged his soul in invective will not, if he has power in his hand, be robbed of his climax

with impunity by a cool response that seems to trifle, and scourges.

I wound up by thanking my father for his devotion to me: I deemed it, I said, excessive and mistaken in the recent instance, but it was for me.

Upon this he awoke from his dreamy-looking stupefaction.

"Richie does me justice. He is my dear boy. He loves me: I love him. None can cheat us of that. He loves his wreck of a father. You have struck me to your feet, Mr. Beltham."

"I don't want to see you there, sir; I want to see you go, and not stand rapping your breast-bone, sounding like a burst drum, as you are," retorted the unappeasable old man.

I begged him in exasperation to keep his similes to himself.

Janet and my aunt Dorothy raised their voices.

My father said: "I am broken."

He put out a swimming hand that trembled when it rested, like that of an aged man grasping a staff. I feared for a moment he was acting, he spoke so like himself, miserable though he appeared: but it was his well-known native old style in a state of decrepitude.

"I am broken," he repeated. "I am like the ancient figure of mortality entering the mouth of the tomb on a sepulchral monument, somewhere, by a celebrated sculptor: I have seen it: I forget the city. I shall presently forget names of men. It is not your

abuse, Mr. Beltham. I should have bowed my head to it till the storm passed. Your facts. . . Oh! Miss Beltham, this last privilege to call you dearest of human beings! my benefactress! my blessing! Do not scorn me, madam."

"I never did; I never will; I pitied you," she cried, sobbing.

The squire stamped his foot.

"Madam," my father bowed gently, "I was under heaven's special protection. I thought so. I feel I have been robbed—I have not deserved it! Oh! madam, no: it was your generosity that I did not deserve. One of the angels of heaven persuaded me to trust in it. I did not know. . . . Adieu, madam. May I be worthy to meet you!—Ay, Mr. Beltham, your facts have committed the death-wound. You have taken the staff out of my hand: you have extinguished the light. I have existed—ay, a pensioner, unknowingly, on this dear lady's charity; to her I say no more. To you, sir, by all that is most sacred to a man—by the ashes of my mother! by the prospects of my boy! I swear the annuity was in my belief a tangible token that my claims to consideration were in the highest sources acknowledged to be just. I cannot speak! One word to you, Mr. Beltham: put me aside, I am nothing:—Harry Richmond!—his fortunes are not lost; he has a future! I entreat you—he is your grandson—give him your support; go this instant to the prince—no! you will not deny your countenance to Harry Richmond:—

let him abjure my name; let me be nameless in his house. And I promise you I shall be unheard of both in Christendom and Heathendom: I have no heart except for my boy's nuptials with the princess: this one thing, to see him the husband of the fairest and noblest lady upon earth, with all the life remaining in me I pray for! I have won it for him. I have a moderate ability, immense devotion. I declare to you, sir, I have lived, actually subsisted, on this hope! and I have directed my efforts incessantly, sleeplessly, to fortify it. I die to do it!—I implore you, sir, go to the prince. If I" (he said this touchingly)—"if I am any further in anybody's way, it is only as a fallen tree." But his inveterate fancifulness led him to add: "And that may bridge a cataract."

My grandfather had been clearing his throat two or three times.

"I'm ready to finish and get rid of you, Richmond."

My father bowed.

"I am gone, sir. I feel I am all but tongue-tied. Think that it is Harry who petitions you to ensure his happiness. To-day I guarantee it."

The old man turned an inquiring eyebrow upon me. Janet laid her hand on him. He dismissed the feline instinct to prolong our torture, and delivered himself briskly.

"Richmond, your last little bit of villany's broken in the egg. I separate the boy from you: he's not your accomplice there, I'm glad to know. You witched the

lady over to pounce on her like a fowler, you threatened her father with a scandal, if he thought proper to force the trap; swore you'd toss her to be plucked by the gossips, eh? She's free of you! You got your English and your Germans here to point their bills, and stretch their necks, and hiss, if this gentleman—and your newspapers!—if he didn't give up to you like a funky traveller to a highwayman. I remember a tale of a clumsy Turpin, who shot himself when he was drawing the pistol out of his holsters to frighten the money-bag out of a marketing farmer. You've done about the same, you Richmond; and, of all the damned poor speeches I ever heard from a convicted felon, yours is the worst—a sheared sheep'd ha' done it more respectably, grant the beast a tongue! The lady is free of you, I tell you. Harry has to thank you for that kindness. She—what is it, Janet? Never mind, I've got the story—she didn't want to marry; but this prince, who called on me just now, happened to be her father's nominee, and he heard of your scoundrelism, and he behaved like a man and a gentleman, and offered himself, none too early nor too late, as it turns out; and the princess, like a good girl, has made amends to her father by accepting him. I've the word of this Prince Hermann for it. Now you can look upon a game of stale-mate. If I had gone to the prince, it wouldn't have been to back your play; but, if you hadn't been guilty of the tricks of a blackguard past praying for, this princess would never have been obliged

to marry a man to protect her father and herself. They sent him here to stop any misunderstanding. He speaks good English, so that's certain. Your lies will be contradicted, every one of 'em, seriatim, in to-morrow's newspapers, setting the real man in place of the wrong one; and you'll draw no profit from them in your fashionable world, where you've been grinning lately, like a blackamoor's head on a conjuror's plate—the devil alone able to account for the body and joinings. Now you can be off."

I went up to my father. His plight was more desperate than mine, for I had resembled the condemned before the firing-party, to whom the expected bullet brings a merely physical shock. He, poor man, heard his sentence, which is the heart's pang of death; and how fondly and rootedly he had clung to the idea of my marriage with the princess was shown in his extinction after this blow.

My grandfather chose the moment as a fitting one to ask me for the last time to take my side.

I replied quietly, and without offence in the tones of my voice, that I thought my father need not lose me into the bargain, after what he had suffered that day.

He just as quietly rejoined with a recommendation to me to divorce myself for good and all from a scoundrel.

I took my father's arm: he was not in a state to move away unsupported.

My aunt Dorothy stood weeping; Janet was at the window, no friend to either of us.

I said to her, "You have your wish."

She shook her head, but did not look back.

My grandfather watched me, step by step, until I had reached the door.

"You're going, are you?" he said. "Then I whistle you off my fingers!"

An attempt to speak was made by my father in the doorway. He bowed wide of the company, like a blind man. I led him out.

Dimness of sight spared me from seeing certain figures, which were at the toll-bar of the pier, on the way to quit our shores. What I heard was not of a character to give me faith in the sanity of the companion I had chosen. He murmured it at first to himself.

"Waddy shall have her monument."

My patience was not proof against the repetition of it aloud to me. Had I been gentler I might have known that his nature was compelled to look forward to something, and he discerned nothing in the future, save the task of raising a memorial to a faithful servant.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HEIRESS PROVES THAT SHE INHERITS THE FEUD AND I GO DRIFTING.

My grandfather lived eight months after a scene that had afforded him high gratification at the heaviest cost a plain man can pay for his pleasures: it killed him.

My father's supple nature helped him to survive it in apparently unimpeded health, so that the world might well suppose him unconquerable, as he meant that it should. But I, who was with him, knew, though he never talked of his wounds, they had been driven into his heart. He collapsed in speech, and became what he used to call "one of the ordinary nodding men," forsaken of his swamping initiative. I merely observed him; I did not invite his confidences, being myself in no mood to give sympathy or to receive it. I was about as tender in my care of him as a military escort bound to deliver up a captive alive.

I left him at Bulsted on my way to London to face the creditors. Adversity had not lowered the admiration of the captain and his wife for the magnificent host

of those select and lofty entertainments which I was led by my errand to examine in the skeleton, and with a wonder as big as theirs, but of another complexion. They hung about him, and perused and petted him quaintly; it was grotesque; they thought him deeply injured: by what, by whom, they could not say; but Julia was disappointed in me for refraining to come out with a sally on his behalf. He had quite intoxicated their imaginations. Julia told me of the things he did not do as marvellingly as of the things he did or had done; the charm, it seemed, was to find herself familiar with him to the extent of all but nursing him and making him belong to her. Pilgrims coming upon the source of the mysteriously-abounding river, hardly revere it the less because they love it more when they behold the babbling channels it issues from; and the sense of possession is the secret, I suppose. Julia could inform me rapturously that her charge had slept eighteen hours at a spell. His remarks upon the proposal to fetch a doctor, feeble in themselves, were delicious to her, because they recalled his old humour to show his great spirit, and from her and from Captain William in turn I was condemned to hear how he had said this and that of the doctor, which in my opinion might have been more concise. "Really, deuced good indeed!" Captain William would exclaim. "Don't you see it, Harry, my boy? He denies the doctor has a right to cast him out of the world on account of his having been the official to introduce him, and he'll only consent to be

visited when he happens to be as incapable of resisting as upon their very first encounter."

The doctor and death and marriage, I ventured to remind the captain, had been riddled in this fashion by the whole army of humourists and their echoes. He and Julia fancied me cold to my father's merits. Fond as they were of the squire, they declared war against him in private, they criticised Janet, they thought my aunt Dorothy slightly wrong in making a secret of her good deed: my father was the victim. Their unabated warmth consoled me in the bitterest of seasons. He found a home with them at a time when there would have been a battle at every step. The world soon knew that my grandfather had cast me off, and with this foundation destroyed, the entire fabric of the Grand Parade fell to the ground at once. The crash was heavy. Jorian DeWitt said truly that what a man hates in adversity is to see "faces;" meaning that the humanity has gone out of them in their curious observation of you under misfortune. You see neither friends nor enemies. You are too sensitive for friends, and are blunted against enemies. You see but the mask of faces: my father was sheltered from that. Julia consulted his wishes in everything; she set traps to catch his whims, and treated them as birds of paradise; she could submit to have the toppling crumpled figure of a man, Bagenhope, his pensioner and singular comforter, in her house. The little creature was fetched out of his haunts in London

purposely to soothe my father with performances on his ancient clarionet, a most querulous plaintive instrument in his discoursing, almost the length of himself; and she endured the nightly sound of it in the guest's blue bedroom, heroically patient, a model to me. Bagenhope drank drams: she allowanced him. He had known my father's mother, and could talk of her in his cups: his playing, and his aged tunes, my father said, were a certification to him that he was at the bottom of the ladder. Why that should afford him peculiar comfort, none of us could comprehend. "He was the humble lover of my mother, Richie," I heard with some confusion, and that he adored her memory. The statement was part of an entreaty to me to provide liberally for Bagenhope's pension before we quitted England. "I am not seriously anxious for much else," said my father. Yet was he fully conscious of the defeat he had sustained and the catastrophe he had brought down upon me: his touch of my hand told me that, and his desire for darkness and sleep. He had nothing to look to, nothing to see twinkling its radiance for him in the dim distance now; no propitiating government, no special providence. But he never once put on a sorrowful air to press for pathos, and I thanked him. He was a man endowed to excite in the most effective manner to a degree fearful enough to win English sympathies despite his un-English faults. He could have drawn tears in floods, infinite pathetic commiseration, from our grangousier public, whose taste is to have it as it may be had to the mixture of

one-third of nature in two-thirds of artifice. I believe he was expected to go about with this beggar's petition for compassion, and it was a disappointment to the generous, for which they punished him, that he should have abstained. And moreover his simple quietude was really touching to true-hearted people. The elements of pathos do not permit of their being dispensed from a stout smoking bowl. I have to record no pathetic field-day. My father was never insincere in emotion.

I spared his friends, chums, associates, excellent men of a kind, the trial of their attachment by shunning them. His servants I dismissed personally, from M. Alphonse down to the coachman Jeremy, whose speech to me was, that he should be happy to serve my father again, or me, if he should happen to be out of a situation when either of us wanted him, which at least showed his preference for employment: on the other hand, Alphonse, embracing the grand extremes of his stereotyped national oratory, where "SI JAMAIS," like the herald Mercury new-mounting, takes its august flight to set in the splendour of "JUSQU'À LA MORT," declared all other service than my father's repugnant, and vowed himself to a hermitage, remote from condiments. They both meant well, and did but speak the diverse language of their blood. Mrs. Waddy withdrew a respited heart to Dipwell; it being, according to her experiences, the third time that my father had relinquished house and furniture to go into eclipse on the continent after blazing over London. She strongly

recommended the continent for a place of restoration, citing his likeness to that animal the chameleon, in the readiness with which he forgot himself among them that knew nothing of him. We quitted Bulsted previous to the return of the family to Riversley. My grandfather lay at the island hotel a month, and was brought home desperately ill. Lady Edbury happened to cross the channel with us. She behaved badly, I thought; foolishly, my father said. She did as much as obliqueness of vision and sharpness of feature could help her to do to cut him in the presence of her party: and he would not take nay. It seemed in very bad taste on his part; he explained to me off-handedly that he insisted upon the exchange of a word or two for the single purpose of protecting her from calumny. By and by it grew more explicable to me how witless she had been to give gossip a handle in the effort to escape it. She sent for him in Paris, but he did not pay the visit.

My grandfather and I never saw one another again. He had news of me from various quarters, and I of him from one; I was leading a life in marked contrast with the homely Riversley circle of days: and this likewise was set in the count of charges against my father. Our continental pilgrimage ended in a course of riotousness that he did not participate in, and was entirely innocent of, but was held accountable for, because he had been judged a sinner.

"I am ordered to say," Janet wrote, scrupulously obeying the order, "that if you will leave Paris, and

come home, and not delay in doing it, your grandfather will receive you on the same footing as heretofore."

As heretofore! in a letter from a young woman supposed to nourish a softness towards me!

I could not leave my father in Paris, alone; I dared not bring him to London. In wrath at what I remembered, I replied that I was willing to return to Riversley if my father should find a welcome as well. The correspondence ceased absolutely.

Janet's formal, stiff, spiritless writing produced the effect on the mind of a series of maxims done in round-hand. How different were they from the chirruping rosy notes of Jenny Chassediane, a songstress in prose! I compared them, and yelled derision of the austere and frozen, graceless women of my country. Good-night to them! Jenny met me when I was as low as a young man can imagine himself to fall, or the nether floors of mortal life to extend. All but at one blow disinherited by my grandfather, unseated for Parliament, discarded of the soul I loved, I was perfectly stripped: which state presents to a young man's logical sensations a sufficient argument for beginning life again upon the first pattern that offers. I determined to live, as we say when we are wasting life. It is burlesque to write that my Ilium was in flames, but it was heavy fact that I had Anchises on my back. Forked heads of the Hydra, Credit, glared horrid in the background; scandal devoured our reputations; our history was common property for any publisher, with any amount of embellishments. These

things were a terrible conflagration to gaze behind upon. The future appeared under no direction of celestial powers, but merely a straight way paved with my poor old Sewis's legacy to the edge of a cliff. My father meanwhile lived almost in solitude, in complete obscurity, blameless towards me certainly; I had robbed him of his friend Jorian, and his one daily course was from our suite of rooms to his second-class restaurant and back: a melancholy existence, I thought. He declared it to be the contrary, and that he had no difficulty whatever in wearing that air of cheerfulness which, according to his dictum, "it should be a man's principle of duty to wear in contempt of rain and thunder, as though it were his nuptial morning—even under sentence of death."

I might as well have been at the Riversley death-bed.

Janet sent a few dry lines to summon me over in April, a pleasant month on heath-lands when the south-west sweeps them. I dropped my father at Bulsted, where we heard that the squire was dead. I could have sworn to the terms of the Will; Mr. Burgin had little to teach me. Janet was the heiress; three thousand pounds per annum fell to the lot of Harry Lepel Richmond, to be paid out of the estate, and pass in reversion to his children, or to Janet's, should the aforesaid Harry die childless.

I was hard hit, and chagrined, but I was not at all angry, for I knew what the will meant. My aunt Dorothy supplied the interlining eagerly to mollify the seeming cruelty. "You have only to ask to have it all,

Harry." The sturdy squire had done his utmost to forward his cherished wishes after death. My aunt received five-and-twenty thousand pounds, the sum she had thrown away. "I promised that no money of mine should go where the other went," she said, and intimated that my father's behaviour in Paris would not make the promise difficult to keep. I could not persuade her of his innocence.

The surprise in store for me was to find how much this rough-worded old man had been liked by his tenantry, his agents and servants. I spoke of it to Janet. "They loved him," she said. "No one who ever met him fairly could help loving him." They followed him to his grave in a body. From what I chanced to hear among them, their squire was the man of their hearts; in short, an Englishman of the kind which is perpetually perishing out of the land. Janet expected me to be enthusiastic likewise, or remorseful. She expected sympathy; she read me the long list of his charities. I was reminded of Julia Bulsted commenting on my father, with her this he did and that. "He had plenty," I said, and Janet shut her lips. Her coldness was irritating.

What ground of accusation had she against me? Our situation had become so delicate that a cold breath sundered us as far as the Poles. I was at liberty to suspect that now she was the heiress, her mind was simply obedient to her grandada's wish; but, as I told my aunt Dorothy, I would not do her that injustice.

"No," said Dorothy; "it is the money that makes *her* position so difficult, unless you break the ice."

I urged that having steadily refused her before, I could hardly advance without some invitation now.

"What invitation?" said my aunt.

"Not a corpse-like consent," said I.

"Harry," she twitted me, "you have not forgiven her."

That was true.

Sir Roderick and Lady Ilchester did not conceal their elation at their daughter's vast inheritance, though the lady appealed to my feelings in stating that her son Charles was not mentioned in the Will. Sir Roderick talked of the squire with personal pride:—"Now as to his management of those unwieldy men, his miners: they sent him up the items of their complaints. He took them one by one, yielding here, discussing there, and holding to his point. So the men gave way; he sent them a month's pay to reward them for their good sense. He had the art of moulding the men who served him in his own likeness. His capacity for business was extraordinary; you never expected it of a country gentleman. He more than quadrupled his inheritance—much more!" I state it to the worthy Baronet's honour, that although it would have been immensely to his satisfaction to see his daughter attracting the suitor proper to an heiress of such magnitude, he did not attempt to impose restriction upon my interviews with Janet: Riversley was mentioned as my home. I tried

to feel at home; the air of the place seemed foreign, and so did Janet. I attributed it partly to her deep mourning dress that robed her in so sedate a womanliness, partly in spite of myself, to her wealth. "Speak to her kindly of your grandfather," said my aunt Dorothy. To do so, however, as she desired it, would be to be guilty of a form of hypocrisy, and I belied my better sentiments by keeping silent. Thus, having ruined myself through anger, I allowed silly sensitiveness to prevent the repair.

It became known that my father was at Bulsted.

I saw trouble one morning on Janet's forehead.

We had a conversation that came near to tenderness; at last she said: "Will you be able to forgive me if I have ever the misfortune to offend you?"

"You won't offend me," said I.

She hoped not.

I rallied her.

"Tut, tut, you talk like any twelve-years-old, Janet."

"I offended you, then!"

"Every day! it's all that I care much to remember."

She looked pleased, but I was so situated that I required passion and abandonment in return for a confession damaging to my pride. Besides, the school I had been graduating in of late unfitted me for a young English gentlewoman's shades and intervolved descents of emotion. A glance up and a dimple in the cheek,

were pretty homely things enough, not the blaze I wanted to unlock me, and absolutely thought I had deserved.

Sir Roderick called her to the library on business, which he was in the habit of doing ten times a day, as well as of discussing matters of business at table, ostentatiously consulting his daughter, with a solemn countenance and a transparently reeling heart of parental exultation. "Janet is supreme," he would say: "my advice is simple advice; I am her chief agent, that is all." Her chief agent, as director of three Companies and chairman of one, was perhaps competent to advise her, he remarked. Her judgment upon ordinary matters he agreed with my grandfather in thinking consummate.

Janet went to him, and shortly afterwards drove him to the station for London. My aunt Dorothy had warned me that she was preparing some deed in my favour, and as I fancied her father to have gone to London for that purpose, and supposed she would now venture to touch on it, I walked away from the east gates of the park as soon as I heard the trot of her ponies, and was led by my evil fate (the stuff the fates are composed of in my instance I have not kept secret) to walk westward. Thither my evil fate propelled me, where accident was ready to espouse it and breed me mortifications innumerable. My father chanced to have heard the particulars of Squire Beltham's will that morning: I believe Captain William's coachman brushed

the subject despondently in my interests; it did not reach him through Julia.

He stood outside the western gates, and as I approached I could perceive a labour of excitement on his frame. He pulled violently at the bars of the obstruction.

"Richie, I am interdicted house and grounds!" he called, and waved his hand towards the lodge: "they decline to open to me."

"Were you denied admission?" I asked him.

"—'Your name, if you please, sir?'—'Mr. Richmond Roy.'—'We are sorry we have orders not to admit you.' And they declined; they would not admit me to see my son."

"Those must be the squire's old orders, I said, and shouted to the lodge-keeper.

My father, with the forethoughtfulness which never forsook him, stopped me.

"No, Richie, no; the good woman shall not have the responsibility of letting me in against orders; she may be risking her place, poor soul! Help me, dear lad."

He climbed the bars to the spikes, tottering, and communicating a convulsion to me as I assisted him in the leap down: no common feat for one of his age and weight.

He leaned on me, quaking.

"Impossible! Richie, impossible!" he cried, and reviewed a series of interjections.

It was some time before I discovered that they related to the Will. He was frenzied, and raved, turning

suddenly from red to pale under what I feared were redoubtable symptoms, physical or mental. He came for sight of the Will; he would contest it, overthrow it. Harry ruined? He would see Miss Beltham and fathom the plot;—angel, he called her, and was absurdly exclamatory, but in dire earnest. He must have had the appearance of a drunken man to persons observing him from the Grange windows.

My father was refused admission at the hall-doors.

The butler, the brute Sillabin, withstood me impassively.

Whose orders had he?

Miss Ilchester's.

"They are afraid of me!" my father thundered.

I sent a message to Janet.

She was not long in coming, followed by a footman who handed a twist of note-paper from my aunt Dorothy to my father. He opened it and made believe to read it, muttering all the while of the Will.

Janet dismissed the men-servants. She was quite colourless.

"We have been stopped in the doorway," I said.

She answered: "I wish it could have been prevented."

"You take it on yourself then?"

She was inaudible.

"My dear Janet, you call Riversley my home, don't you?"

"It is yours."

"Do you intend to keep up this hateful feud now my grandfather is dead?"

"No, Harry, not I."

"Did you give orders to stop my father from entering the house and grounds?"

"I did."

"You won't have him here?"

"Dear Harry, I hoped he would not come just yet."

"But you gave the orders?"

"Yes."

"You're rather incomprehensible, my dear Janet."

"I wish you could understand me, Harry."

"You arm your servants against him!"

"In a few days——" she faltered.

"You insult him and me *now*," said I, enraged at the half indication of her relenting, which spoiled her look of modestly-resolute beauty, and seemed to show that she meant to succumb without letting me break her. "You are mistress of the place."

"I am. I wish I were not."

"You are mistress of Riversley, and you refuse to let my father come in!"

"While I am the mistress, yes."

"Why?"

"Anywhere but here, Harry! If he will see me or aunty, if he will kindly appoint any other place, we will meet him, we shall be glad."

"I request you to let him enter the house. Do you consent or not?"

"No."

"He was refused once at these doors. Do you refuse him a second time?"

"I do."

"You mean that?"

"I am obliged to."

"You won't yield a step to me?"

"I cannot."

The spirit of an armed champion was behind those mild features, soft almost to supplication to me that I might know her to be under a constraint. The nether lip dropped in breathing, the eyes wavered: such was her appearance in open war with me, but her will was firm.

Of course I was not so dense as to be unable to perceive her grounds for refusing.

She would not throw the burden on her grandada, even to propitiate me—the man she still loved.

But that she should have a reason, and think it good, in spite of me, and cling to it, defying me, and that she should do hurt to a sentient human creature, who was my father, for the sake of blindly obeying to the letter the injunction of the dead, were intolerable offences to me and common humanity. I, for my own part, would have forgiven her, as I congratulated myself upon reflecting. It was on her account—to open her mind, to enlighten her concerning right and wrong

determination, to bring her feelings to bear upon a crude judgment—that I condescended to argue the case. Smarting with admiration, both of the depths and shallows of her character, and of her fine figure, I began: —She was to consider how young she was to pretend to decide on the balance of duties, how little of the world she had seen; an oath sworn at the bedside of the dead was a solemn thing, but was it Christian to keep it to do an unnecessary cruelty to the living? if she had not studied philosophy, she might at least discern the difference between just resolves and insane—between those the soul sanctioned, and those hateful to nature; to bind oneself to carry on another person's vindictiveness was voluntarily to adopt slavery; this was flatly-avowed insanity, and so forth, with an emphatic display of patience.

The truth of my words could not be controverted. Unhappily I confounded right speaking with right acting, and conceived, because I spoke so justly, that I was specially approved in pressing her to yield.

She broke the first pause to say, "It's useless, Harry. I do what I think I am bound to do."

"Then I have spoken to no purpose!"

"If you will only be kind, and wait two or three days?"

"Be sensible!"

"I am, as much as I can be."

"Hard as a flint—you always were! The most grateful woman alive, I admit. I know not another, I

assure you, Janet, who, in return for ten, twenty millions of money, would do such a piece of wanton cruelty. What! You think he was not punished enough when he was berated and torn to shreds in your presence? They would be cruel, perhaps—we will suppose it of your sex—but not so fond of their consciences as to stamp a life out to keep an oath. I forget the terms of the Will. Were you enjoined in it to force him away?"

My father had stationed himself in the background. Mention of the Will caught his ears, and he commenced shaking my aunt Dorothy's note, blinking and muttering at a great rate, and pressing his temples.

"I do not read a word of this," he said,—"upon my honour, not a word; and I know it is her handwriting. That Will!—only, for the love of Heaven, madam,"—he bowed vaguely to Janet—"not a syllable of this to the princess, or we are destroyed. I have a great bell in my head, or I would say more. Hearing is out of the question."

Janet gazed piteously from him to me.

To kill the deer and be sorry for the suffering wretch is common.

I begged my father to walk along the carriage-drive. He required that the direction should be pointed out accurately, and promptly obeyed me, saying: "I back you, remember. I should certainly be asleep now but for this extraordinary bell." After going some steps, he turned to shout "Gong," and touched his ear. He

walked loosely, utterly unlike the walk habitual to him even recently in Paris.

"Has he been ill?" Janet asked.

"He won't see the doctor; the symptoms threaten apoplexy or paralysis, I'm told. Let us finish. You were aware that you were to inherit Riversley?"

"Yes, Riversley, Harry; I knew that; I knew nothing else."

"The old place was left to you that you might bar my father out?"

"I gave my word."

"You pledged it—swore?"

"No."

"Well, you've done your worst, my dear. If the axe were to fall on your neck for it, you would still refuse, would you not?"

Janet answered softly: "I believe so."

"Then, good-by," said I.

That feminine softness and its burden of unalterable firmness pulled me two ways, angering me all the more that I should feel myself susceptible to a charm which came of spiritual rawness rather than sweetness; for she needed not to have made the answer in such a manner; there was pride in it; she liked the soft sound of her voice while declaring herself invincible: I could see her picturing herself meek but fixed.

"Will you go, Harry? Will you not take Riversley?" she said.

I laughed.

"To spare you the repetition of the dilemma?"

"No, Harry; but this might be done."

"But—my fullest thanks to you for your generosity: really! I speak in earnest:—it would be decidedly against your grandada's wishes, seeing that he left the Grange to you, and not to me."

"Grandada's wishes! I cannot carry out all his wishes," she sighed.

"Are you anxious to?"

We were on the delicate ground, as her crimson face revealed to me that she knew as well as I.

I, however, had little delicacy in leading her on it. She might well feel that she deserved some wooing.

I fancied she was going to be overcome, going to tremble and show herself ready to fall on my bosom, and I was uncertain of the amount of magnanimity in store there.

She replied calmly: "Not immediately."

"You are not immediately anxious to fulfil his wishes?"

"Harry, I find it hard to do those that are thrust on me."

"But, as a matter of serious obligation, you would hold yourself bound by and by to perform them all?"

"I cannot speak any further of my willingness, Harry."

"The sense of duty is evidently always sufficient to make you act upon the negative—to deny, at least?"

"Yes, I daresay," said Janet.

We shook hands like a pair of commercial men.

I led my father to Bulsted. He was too feverish to remain there. In the evening, after having had a fruitless conversation with my aunt Dorothy upon the event of the day, I took him to London that he might visit his lawyers, who kindly consented to treat him like doctors, when I had arranged to make over to them three parts of my annuity, and talked of his case encouragingly; the effect of which should not have astonished me. He closed a fit of reverie resembling his drowsiness, by exclaiming: "Richie will be indebted to his dad for his place in the world after all!" Temporarily, he admitted, we must be fugitives from creditors, and as to that eccentric tribe, at once so human and so inhuman, he imparted many curious characteristics gained of his expèrience. Jorian DeWitt had indeed compared them to the female ivy that would ultimately kill its tree, but inasmuch as they were parasites, they loved their debtor; he was life and support to them, and there was this remarkable fact about him: by slipping out of their clutches at critical moments when they would infallibly be pulling you down, you were enabled to return to them fresh, and they became inspired with another lease of lively faith in your future: et cætera. I knew the language. It was a flash of himself, and a bad one, but I was not the person whom he meant to deceive with it. He was soon giving me other than verbal proof out of England that he was not thoroughly beaten. We had no home in England. At an hotel in Vienna, upon the

close of the aristocratic season there, he renewed an acquaintance with a Russian lady, Countess Kornikoff, and he and I parted. She was middle-aged, rich, laughter-loving, and no stranger to the points of his history which he desired to have notorious. She disliked the Margravine of Rippau, who was in Vienna, and did not recognize us. I heard that it was the Margravine who had despatched Prince Hermann to England as soon as she discovered Ottilia's flight thither. She commissioned him to go straightway to Roy in London, and my father's having infatuatedly left his own address for Prince Ernest's in the island, brought Hermann down: he only met Eckart in the morning train. I mention it to show the strange working of events.

Lady Edbury was in Vienna, too. My father's German life and his English were thus brought in reflection upon the episode he was commencing, and as I would not take part in it, and he sprang in one of his later frenzies from the choice of the obscure ways offered him by my companionship, we no longer went together now that there might have been good in it.

Janet sent me a letter by the hands of Temple in August. It was moderately well written for so blunt a writer, and might have touched me but for other news coming simultaneously that shook the earth under my feet.

She begged my forgiveness for her hardness, adding characteristically that she could never have acted in any other manner. The delusion that what she was she

must always be, because it was her nature, had mastered her understanding, or rather it was one of the doors of her understanding not yet opened: she had to respect her grandada's wishes. She made it likewise appear that she was ready for further sacrifices to carry out the same. Very submissive! I could see that modesty-bewrayed expression, but the want of clearness had a corresponding effect on my sentiments.

"At least you will accept a division of the property, Harry. It should be yours. It is an excess, and I feel it a snare to me. I was a selfish child; I may not become an estimable woman. You have not pardoned my behaviour at the island last year, and I cannot think I was wrong; perhaps I might learn. I want your friendship and counsel. Aunty will live with me: she says that you would complete us. At any rate I transfer Riversley to you. Send me your consent. Papa *will* have it before the transfer is signed."

The letter ended with an adieu, a petition for an answer, and "yours affectionately."

On the day of its date, a Viennese newspaper lying on the Salzburg Hotel table chronicled Ottilia's marriage to Prince Hermann.

I replied in a series of commendably temperate and philosophical lines, as much the expression of my real self as the public execution of a jig on the Salzach Brücke would have been. We two were evidently not only diverse, but adverse, I said. She had a strong will: so had I, and unfortunately our opinions always

differed. We would be friends, of course. As to her nature, she would learn that it is the especially human task to discern in what it is bad, and in what it is good, and to shape it ourselves. (I was still more prolix and pedantic than I dare to show: even worse than impertinent. "The dog cannot change its nature: how are we to judge of the dog's master upon that plea?") It was an unpardonable effusion. But one who would write like a high philosopher when he feels like a wounded savage, commits these offences. The letter was despatched to do its work.

I then turned on Temple to walk him off his legs if I could.

Carry your fever to the Alps, you of minds diseased: not to sit down in sight of them ruminating, for bodily ease and comfort will trick the soul and set you measuring our lean humanity against yonder sublime and infinite; but mount, rack the limbs, wrestle it out among the peaks; taste danger, sweat, earn rest: learn to discover ungrudgingly that haggard fatigue is the fair vision you have run to earth, and that rest is your uttermost reward. Would you know what it is to hope again, and have all your hopes at hand? Hang upon the crags at a gradient that makes your next step a debate between the thing you are and the thing you may become. There the merry little hopes grow for the climber like flowers and food, immediate, prompt to prove their uses, sufficient if just within the grasp, as mortal hopes should be. How the old lax life closes in

about you there! You are the man of your faculties, nothing more. Why should a man pretend to more? We ask it wonderingly when we are healthy. Poetic rhapsodists in the vales below may tell you of the joy and grandeur of the upper regions, they cannot pluck you the medical herb. He gets that for himself who wanders the marshy ledge at nightfall to behold the distant Sennhüttchen twinkle, who leaps the green-eyed crevasses, and in the solitude of an emerald alp stretches a salt hand to the mountain kine.

CHAPTER XIII.

MY RETURN TO ENGLAND.

I PASSED from the Alps to the desert, and fell in love with the East, until it began to consume me. History, like the air we breathe, must be in motion to keep us uncorrupt: otherwise its ancient homes are infectious. My passion for the sun and his baked people lasted two years, the drudgery of the habit of voluntary exile one more, and then, quite unawares, I was seized with a thirst for England, so violent that I abandoned a correspondence of several months, lying for me both at Damascus and Cairo, to catch the boat for Europe. A dream of a rainy morning, in the midst of the glowing furnace, may have been the origin of the wild craving I had for my native land and Janet. The moist air of flying showers and drenched spring buds surrounded her; I saw her plainly lifting a rose's head; was it possible I had ever refused to be her yokefellow? Could so noble a figure of a fair young woman have been offered and repudiated again and again by a man in his senses? I spurned the intolerable idiot, to stop reflec-

tion. Perhaps she did likewise now. No, she was faithful to the death! This I repeated hotly, in the belief that it was only to support her praises. My aunt Dorothy and Temple had kept me informed of her simple daily round of life, sometimes in London, mainly at Riversley: she was Janet still. Temple in his latest letter had mentioned 'a Lady Kane' vaguely in connexion with Janet. There was nothing to alarm me save my own eagerness. The news of my father was perplexing, leading me to suppose him re-established in London, awaiting the coming on of his case. Whence the money?

Money and my father, I knew, met as they divided, fortuitously and profusely; in illustration of which, I well remembered, while passing in view of the Key of the Adige along the Lombard plain, a circumstance during my Alpine tour with Temple, of more importance to him than to me, when my emulous friend, who would never be beaten, sprained his ankle severely on the crags of a waterfall, not far from Innsbruck, and was invited into a house by a young English lady, daughter of a retired Colonel of Engineers of our army. The colonel was an exile from his country for no grave crime: but, as he told us, as much an exile as if he had committed a capital offence in being the father of nine healthy girls. He had been, against his judgment, he averred, persuaded to fix on his Tyrolese spot of ground by the two elder ones. Five were now married to foreigners; thus they repaid him by scattering good English blood on the

race of Counts and Freiherrs! "I could understand the decrees of Providence before I was a parent," said this dear old Colonel Heddon. "I was looking up at the rainbow when I heard your steps, asking myself whether it was seen in England at that instant, and why on earth I should be out of England!" He lived abroad to be able to dower his girls. His sons-in-law were gentlemen; so far he was condemned to be satisfied, but supposing all his girls married foreigners? His primitive frankness charmed us, and it struck me that my susceptible Temple would have liked to be in a position to re-assure him with regard to the Lucy of the four. We were obliged to confess that she was catching a foreign accent. The old colonel groaned. He begged us to forgive him for not treating us as strangers; his heart leapt out to young English gentlemen.

My name, he said, reminded him of a great character at home, in the old days: a certain Roy-Richmond, son of an actress and somebody, so the story went; and there was an old Lord Edbury who knew more about it than most. "Now Roy was an adventurer, but he had a soul of true chivalry, by gad, he had! Plenty of foreign whiffmajigs are to be found, but you won't come upon a fellow like that. Where he got his money from none knew; all I can say is, I don't believe he ever did a dirty action for it. And one matter I'll tell you of:—pardon me a moment, Mr. Richmond, I haven't talked English for half a century, or, at least, a quarter. Old Lord Edbury put him down in his will for some thou-

sands, and he risked it to save a lady, who hated him for his pains. Lady Edbury was of the Bolton blood, none of the tamest; they breed good cavalry men. She ran away from her husband once. The old lord took her back. 'It's at your peril, mind!' says she. Well, Roy hears by-and-by of a fresh affair. He mounted horse; he was in the saddle, I've been assured, a night and a day, and posted himself between my lady's park-gates, and the house, at dusk. The rumour ran that he knew of the marquis playing spy on his wife. However, such was the fact; she was going off again, and the marquis did play the mean part. She walked down the park-road, and, seeing the cloaked figure of a man, she imagined him to be her Lothario, and very naturally, you will own, fell into his arms. The gentleman in question was an acquaintance of mine; and the less you follow our example the better for you. It was a damnable period in morals! He told me that he saw the scene from the gates, where he had his carriage-and-four ready. The old lord burst out of an ambush on his wife and her supposed paramour; the lady was imprisoned in her rescuer's arms, and my friend retired on tiptoe, which was, I incline to think, the best thing he could do. Our morals were abominable. Lady Edbury would never see Roy-Richmond after that, nor the old lord neither. He doubled the sum he had intended to leave him, though. I heard that he married a second young wife. Roy, I believe, ended by marrying a great heiress and reforming. He was an eloquent fellow, and stood

like a general in full uniform, cocked hat and feathers; most amusing fellow at table; beat a Frenchman for anecdote."

I spared Colonel Heddon the revelation of my relationship to his hero, thanking his garrulity for interrupting me.

How I pitied him when I drove past the gates of the main route to Innsbruck! For I was bound homeward: I should soon see England, green cloudy England, the white cliffs, the meadows, the heaths! And I thanked the colonel again in my heart for having done something to reconcile me to the idea of that strange father of mine.

A banner-like stream of morning-coloured smoke rolled north-eastward as I entered London, and I drove to Temple's chambers. He was in court, engaged in a case as junior to his father. Temple had become that radiant human creature, a working man, then? I walked slowly to the court, and saw him there, hardly recognizing him in his wig. All that he had to do was to prompt his father in a case of collision at sea; the barque Priscilla had run foul of a merchant brig, near the mouth of the Thames, and though I did not expect it on hearing the vessel's name, it proved to be no other than the barque Priscilla of Captain Jasper Welsh. Soon after I had shaken Temple's hand, I was going through the same ceremony with the captain himself, not at all changed in appearance, who blessed his heart for seeing me, cried out that a beard and mustachios

made a foreign face of a young Englishman, and was full of the 'providential' circumstance of his having confided his case to Temple and his father.

"Ay, ay, Captain Welsh," said Temple, "we have pulled you through, only another time mind you keep an eye on that look-out man of yours. Some of your men, I suspect, see double with an easy conscience. A close net makes slippery eels."

"Have you anything to say against my men?" the captain inquired.

Temple replied that he would talk to him about it presently, and laughed as he drew me away.

"His men will get him into a deuce of a scrape some day, Richie. I shall put him on his guard. Have you had all my letters? You look made of iron. I'm beginning capitally, not afraid of the Court a bit, and I hope I'm not pert. I wish your father had taken it better!"

"Taken what?" said I.

"Haven't you heard from him?"

"Two or three times: a mass of interjections."

"You know he brought his case forward at last? Of course it went as we all knew it would."

"Where is he? Have you seen Janet lately?"

"He is at Miss Ilchester's house in London."

"Write the address on a card."

Temple wrote it rather hesitatingly, I thought.

We talked of seeing one another in the evening, and I sprang off to Janet's residence, forgetting to grasp

my old friend's hand at parting. I was madly anxious to thank her for the unexpected tenderness towards my father. And now nothing stood between us! I would reward her for this! Or to phrase it becomingly, and more in harmony with my better feelings, I would claim, beg for, the honour and happiness of dedicating my life to her. She was mine, the very image of fidelity! I loved her person, her mind, her soul: I could not but be sure of it now.

Could I be less fierily sure of myself when I beheld her at last? It was sweeter than the dream of seeing her tending roses. She was seated beside an arm-chair, soothing a sleeper with her hand on his, and he was my father. My aunt Dorothy came up to me and embraced me, murmuring a hush. Janet did not move. The curtains of the room were down: there was a dull red fire in the grate: I heard my father's heavy breathing.

"Harry!" Janet said softly.

I knelt to her.

"My own and only Janet!"

"Do not awaken him," she whispered.

"No, but I am home."

"I am glad."

One hand she was obliged to surrender. I kissed it. She seemed startled at my warmth.

"I cannot wait to say how I love you, my Janet! You have not written to me once. I do not blame you; all the faults are mine. I have learnt to know myself. Why do you take back your hands?"

An exchange of glances, like a flash over a hidden terror, shot between Janet and my aunt Dorothy.

"Did you read aunty's last letter?" Janet asked.

"No recent letters," said I, checked by the tone of her voice. "Why should I? My truest Janet! I came home for you. On the faith of a man, I love you with all my soul."

"Do not touch me," she said, shrinking from my arm.

The sleeper stirred and muttered.

"We are expecting Harry," my aunt Dorothy said to him.

"Eight Harrys have reigned in England," he ejaculated.

"It is time for your drive," said Janet.

My aunt Dorothy led me out of the room. "He must be prepared for the sight of you, Harry. The doctors say that a shock may destroy him. Janet treats him so wonderfully."

"She's a little cold to me, aunty. I deserve it, I know. I love her with my whole heart, that's the truth. I believe I have only just woke up."

"You did not receive my last letter, Harry?"

"I've had no letters for nine months and more. By the way, my father's case is over, and that's a good thing; he went like a ship on the rocks. Tell me, how it was Janet brought him here. I could swear she has not taken him to Riversley! Has she? And I love her for her obstinacy: anything that's a part of her character!"

"Harry, remember, you wrote cruelly to her!"

"I wrote only once."

"The silence was cruel."

"I will pay all penalties. I will wait her pleasure, be the humblest of wooers."

From the windows of the front drawing-room, where we stood, I saw Janet accepting my father's hand to mount to a seat in her carriage, and he stepped after her, taking her help in return, indebted to it for some muscular assistance, it was plain from the compression of her lips and knitted brows.

"Why does she go without speaking to me again, aunty?"

"She gives him his drive every day, so that he may say he has shown himself. He cannot bear to think people should suppose him beaten, and she is so courted that they have to pay court to him as well."

"How good of her!"

My aunt Dorothy fell to weeping. I pressed her on my heart and cheered her, still praising Janet. She wept the faster.

"Is there anything new the matter?" I said.

"It's not new to us, Harry. I'm sure you're brave?"

"Brave! what am I asked to bear?"

"Much, if you love her, Harry!"

"Speak."

"It is better you should hear it from me, Harry. I wrote you word of it. We all imagined it would not

be disagreeable to you. Who could foresee this change in you? She least of all!"

"She's in love with some one?"

"I did not say exactly in love."

"Tell me the worst."

"She is engaged to be married."

CHAPTER XIV.

JANET AND I.

JANET and I were alone.

When your mistress is faithless to you in your absence, and you hear of the infamy, your prompt inquiry is for the name of the man. His name!—just that. Unto what monster has the degraded wretch sunk to link herself?

And that was the question of my mouth after hearing my aunt Dorothy's tidings. But men are not all made alike, and I, burning to ask for it, was silent, dreading a name that would give shape and hue to my hate and envy; for the man chosen by Janet would be pre-eminently manful, not one to be thought little of: and I had no wish to think of him. I very soon escaped from the house, promising to return in the evening or next day. I could not quit the street. So Janet, driving my father back from the park, surprised me pacing up and down; my father had me by the hand, and I was compelled to go in with them.

The prescription of an hour's rest before dinner withdrew my father; Dorothy Beltham went to dress: Janet remained.

We exchanged steady looks. She was not one to wince from a look.

Whoever the man, the act of the ceremony was as good as performed when Janet gave him her word to wed him.

Her comely face was like marble. She stood upright; I could not fancy it challengingly, but I had expected an abashed or partly remorseful air in the woman who took advantage of my absence to plight herself to another, and my nerves had revelled since the touch of her hand (this unknown man's absolute possession), in descending from the carriage, all the way up to the drawing-room, anticipating the shrewd bitterness of seeing that dim taint of guilt on her conscious figure. She stood gravely attentive.

"Janet, I have to thank you for your great kindness to my father."

"You feel, Harry, that I had to make amends for old unkindness."

"I thank you with all my heart."

"It is my happiness to please you even in trifles."

"This is not a trifle."

"It was no effort to me."

"You found him involved in debts?"

She jerked her shoulders slightly.

"There were debts, which do not exist now."

"You were determined to bind me hand and foot in gratitude?"

"No; only to do what you would have done, as far as it lay in my power."

"I came home imagining you were disengaged."

"Aunty wrote——"

"She did: the letter never reached me; otherwise I should not be here now. Or, who knows? I should have been here earlier."

"You have come, Harry."

"This I can say, Janet, that, through those old days when I was pulled to pieces, and unjust and unkind to you, and Heriot praised you as one who would be the loyalest woman to her husband in all England, I echoed him."

"Well, Harry, I won't thank you for compliments. I think I can keep my word."

"To this man? You are not married yet."

"No," she uttered mechanically.

"Has the marriage been delayed? Pardon me, you seem to speak of it in a tone——"

"I put it off from the winter to summer, Harry, hoping that you would come and be by me at the altar."

"I? Why, what character did you assign to me in it?"

"A friend's, I hoped: my old and best friend's!"

"Why, you and I were as good as betrothed!"

"Surely never!"

"You would have had me help to give you away?"

"I thought I might look to Harry for that."

"Give away what has been mine longer than I can recollect! Give you?—Oh! I talk; I wish I could only feel you the Janet I could have taken and doubled myself with her, as Heriot said. It was, I believe, in my heart, you that I loved, Janet. Stand by you, and *see* you given away? But I have had you in my arms! I have kissed you! You can't forget me! And to be true, you cannot give yourself except to me. Unless you confess to me that you have quite changed. Make that confession, and there's the end. If you are true you are mine. What is this keeping of the word? You pledge your pride, and are afraid to break it for pride's sake. You love, you must love me; you love none but me. I'm as used to it as the air I breathe. Why, good heaven, I could not treat you as the wife of any but myself. I laugh at a marriage-service that pretends to bind you to a law and exclude me. Not only it can't be, but supposing it were, I would not hesitate to break it: and because I have the right; and because I would do right by you. We have been betrothed almost since we were born; certainly since we were children. I know the ways, the turn of your mind, your moods, your habits, from the plainest to the sweetest. Do you not half drop your eyelids—? But answer me: can a man with such memories as I have let you go? I claim you for the very reason that you are true and can't swerve."

Her straightforward intellect was bewildered by these raving sophistries. The marvel of the transformation of

me, too, must have added to her momentary sense of helplessness.

"Harry! your last letter!" she said, breathing in pain.

"The letter of a fool, a coxcomb! Is it to punish me for that?"

"Not to punish. But that letter: I searched for a word of love, the smallest sign; I had it on my heart all night to see if I could dream of something better than I found in it:—not one!"

"But I was ruined at the time I wrote it. Reflect! Had I lost such a little? And to fill the cup you shut your doors on my father! I could have excused and accounted for your doing so at a moment when I was less sharply wounded and he less inoffensive. How can I explain my situation to you—you don't understand it? Yet I see myself in your eyes. I'm not a stranger there. Janet, come to me!"

Her voice was hoarse in uttering some protest.

"Is this marriage-day fixed then?" I demanded.

"It is. Let me go now, Harry. Your father likes to see me grandly dressed."

"Does this man dine with you who is to marry you?"

"Not to-day."

"Not he to-day, but I! Your father and mother approve the match?"

"Yes."

"Then it's a nobleman. Am I right?"

"He is of noble birth."

"You speak like a ballad. And it was you that fixed the day?"

"Yes."

"Then you belong to the man!"

"I cannot but think that I do indeed. And now, Harry, let me go."

"One word,—you love him?"

"You must read me by my deeds."

"Come, your deeds have not been of the kindest to me; do you love me?"

"I loved my dear friend Harry, who would once have spared me such a question, if it distressed me," said Janet, and my aunt Dorothy entering the room with my father helped her to fly.

Dining with my shattered father was a dismal feast: dining as Janet's guest after such a conversation as ours had been was no happy privilege. The strangeness of the thought that she was not to belong to me numbed my senses. At intervals a dark flash of fancy pictured her the bride of another, but it seemed too dark, impossible to realize: she talked and smiled too pleasantly to make it credible. She was a woman who would talk and smile while stepping to the altar, perhaps be a little paler; how give her finger to be ringed? Why, the hateful creature would extend it with matter-of-fact simplicity, as she did her hand to the wine-glass: but to whom? who was the man? She was giving it for a title. Her love unsatisfied, she had grown ambitious. The idea of her marrying for social rank cooled and

relieved my distemper, but at her expense, for, though she complimented me, I must despise her! She had resolved that I should owe her much: her management of my father was a miracle of natural sweetness and tact; she helped out his sentences, she divined his unfinished ones. Could it have been predicted that we should ever have sat together on these terms? She affected to relish him. On whose account but Harry Richmond's? Was it merely to do me friendly service? No, she was mine still!

My self-cajoling heart rushed out to her adoringly, more hopelessly captive from every effort to escape. For she was not mine; she never would be. The qualities I loved in her, that made her stand side by side with my bravest manhood, and had once preserved her for me in defiance of coldness, were against me now: my chance had gone.

And studying her acutely in the careless looks one throws at table, I perceived what had not been so visible when we were alone, a singular individual tone in her developed womanliness, a warmth of grace in her temperate nature: the frown was very rare, and the lips would be at play under it. The soft-shut lips had a noble repose. She had gained the manner of a perfect young English gentlewoman, without being fashioned after a pattern, without the haunting shadow of primness, which has been charged to the lack of the powers of educated speech in the reputed fairest of earth's ladies. She had learnt the art of dressing, and knew her tricks of colour, my Janet.

"Will you go to the opera for an hour to-night, Harry?" she asked me.

It sounded to me: "Will you run with me and see the man I am plighted to?"

"Yes," I said.

The solemnity of the affirmative amazed her.

My father spoke.

"Richie has a dress-suit in the right-hand drawer of the third compartment of my rosewood wardrobe, and the family watch bequeathed me by my mother lies on it, stopped at a quarter to ten."

His voice broke.

Janet put her hand out to him.

"Yes! Do I not remember? You told us you would keep his 'uniform' for him, so that if he liked he might go into society the moment of his return."

My father said he was a general.

I went up to Janet.

"Will you give me that letter?"

"What letter?"

"The letter you had on your heart all night."

She blushed: she shook her head.

I knew the blush innocent, but it was a blush, and my heart burst out on it like a hound, chasing it through all the shifts and windings of feminine flight. I felt that I was master.

How if the man should be the manly good fellow I supposed him of necessity to be, sincerely fond of her?

Why, then I pitied him and loved her none the better for surrendering to me. And in truth, she would certainly have chosen no other kind of man than the best of our English blood.

She liked my half-indifferent manner on the road to the opera; I was able to prattle, and we laughed and chatted. My father appeared somewhat agitated: he sat erect, saying: "I show myself; I show myself." Janet laid her hand in his. "Ay, the most absolute self-command," said he; and with a look on me: "Old Richie!"

My aunt Dorothy accounted for the observation we attracted upon entering the box.

"Janet has been much noticed."

"Do you see the man she is engaged to, aunty?"

She gazed round the house.

"No."

I quitted the box to look at her myself from the outside, and strolled about the lobby only to fall into the clutches of Lady Kane.

"Here, come with me," said this detestable old woman; "I want to talk to you and taste you after your travels."

I had to enter her box and sit beside her.

"I can take liberties with you now; we're almost relatives," said she.

"Really?" said I.

"Don't acknowledge it, if you don't like it," she ran on; "I find it quite enough to be great-aunt to one

young man. That's a fardel pretty nearly off my shoulders. Well, and how have you been? and what have you seen? Are you going to write a book? Don't. It's bad style. Are you not ashamed of yourself to have put us back six months? I begged, I implored. No. A will of iron! All the better, though we feel the pinch of it just at present. I like a young woman with plenty of will, though it's nasty to find it in opposition. Got rid of your disappointments, poor boy? You mustn't play high stakes without good backing. I shall take you in hand, and train you and set you up. Do you like this opera-shouting? You haven't brought back a Circassian, eh, sir? Hm'm, there's no knowing your tricks. If I'm to do anything for you in the market I must have a full confession. So I said to my monkey, and he went on his knees, and I listened. You are Calibans! You all of you want washing and combing to make you decent."

Her sick old stale-milk-shot eyes wavered across me nimbly while she rattled her licensed double-dowager's jargon, suitable to Edbury's ears.

"You're gloomy," she said, peering intently. One could have imagined her fluttering in suspense like a kite over the fallows.

"I'll tell you what, my lady," said I, for she pressed me obstinately to open my mind to her. "I've been so long out of England that I hardly remember the language, and I am going round the house to take lessons."

"Very well, go along;" she dismissed me: "and call on me to-morrow early. Yes, there he is;" she glanced at Janet's box. "We don't object to her showing him about; I don't mind it a bit for my part; I have no bourgeois prejudices—if she's quite sure he won't break out again. But you've had enough of scandal, eh? You'll take him in hand now you are back. Go, you bronzed boy, and try and finish your toilet early to-morrow morning: I will see you at eleven. I think I've a match for you in my head."

Janet's eyes dwelt on me a half instant when I resumed my place behind her seat.

"Do you ever see that old woman, Lady Kane?" said I.

She answered: "You have been talking to her."

I threw my remarks into the form of a meditation:

"Some of those old women of society are as intolerable as washing-tub shrews. She couldn't have been more impudent to me or concerning you if she had been bred in the fish-market. Why does one come to be stared at and overhauled in public by a gabbling harridan!"

"We have to consider whether it is good medicine for our patient," said Janet. "Your father likes it, Harry."

"My dearest, my friend!" I whispered, and saw the edge of the cheek before me burn with crimson colour that stole on like a flood tide round among the short spare wisps of curls free of the up-driving comb on her

bare neck. A sight heavenly sweet to see; convincing of my mastery!

I touched her dress. The trial of so true a heart as hers had my sympathy, and I was soothed by the thought that I could in my soul respect her even after I had subdued her, for supposing we had not been in public, I would still have refrained from a lover's privileges, and rather have helped her to reflect upon what we, who were under a common spell of love, could best do in reason than have struck her senses.

But it was too hard to sit near that divinely-flaming tell-tale neck and face, merely to speak and hear short replies. I fled to an upper circle, where Temple met me and drew me into the box of Anna Penrhys.

She exclaimed: "I am so glad to see you not unhappy!"

"Why should I be?" said I.

"Men change. I wished it once, but if you are satisfied now, we won't any of us complain. I like you the more, Harry, for not being like the majority."

I guessed at her meaning: "Hunting the heiress? no, that's not my pursuit."

"But I'm in love with Janet Ilchester," said Anna, warmly. "She has improved him wonderfully."

"My father? yes."

"I was speaking for the moment of a more fortunate person, Harry. Look down there."

I looked down at Janet's box, and beheld the Marquis of Edbury occupying my place.

Anna replied to the look I levelled at her.

"Didn't you know? Lady Kane managed it cleverly, they say. I was one of the surprised, but I am still under thirty."

Temple did me a similar service.

"I wrote you word of the engagement, Richie."

"You told me she had engaged herself to Edbury?" said I, and shut my eyes; for if ever a man had devils within him I had. She must have caught sight of her betrothed lover in the house when she threw me on such an ocean of conceit with her treacherous blush.

CHAPTER XV.

JANET'S HEROISM.

I WENT to the dear peaceful home of Temple that night, and should have been glad if his sisters had kissed me as they did him.

Next day, having, with Mr. Temple's help, procured a set of furnished chambers, I sent a note to my father by messenger, in which I requested him to come to me immediately.

The answer was Janet's. It ran :—

"MY DEAR HARRY—

"We do not think it prudent to let your father be away from us.

"He watches the door for you. Bear in mind that he has passed through an illness.

"We hope you will not allow it to be later than to-morrow before you visit us.

"Your affectionate,

"JANET."

So she attached no idea of shame to her approaching

alliance with Edbury. She wrote to me as though she had not in the slightest degree degraded herself!

Janet was a judge of what men were; she must have read him through. Was it that she was actually in secret of the order of women who are partial to rakes, and are moved by the curiosity of their inexperienced kinship? Or had the monstrous old intriguer Lady Kane hoodwinked and spellbound my girl?

I was not to be later than to-morrow in visiting her: —therefore Edbury was expected to-day. It would be as well to see them together, measure them and consider how they were sorted. "With all my heart I'm sorry for her!" I said. I thought I was cured.

Presently—and this is the bitter curse of love—the whole condition of things passed into imagination, holding proportionate relations to reality, but intense as though I walked in fire, and shivering me with alternate throbs of black and bright.

I despised her: I envied him.

I felt certain that I could outrun him, and I loathed the bestial rivalry.

Her choice of the man painted him insufferably fair to me: the shadow of him upon her distorted her features.

But that shadow gave her a vile attractiveness, and thereof begat a sense of power in me to crush his pretences.

I won her; she was tasteless. I lost her; she was all human life.

Was it not a duty towards the dead as well as the living that I should take her in contempt of reluctance?

Would it not be stirring a devilry for me to interpose?

And so forth; lovers can colour the sketch. It wants the cunning of the hand that sweeps the lyre to sound the incessant revolutions which made day or night for me upon a recurring breath; shocks that were changes of the universe.

The pain of this contest in imagination when passion predominates is, that you can get no succour of trivial material circumstances: things are reduced to their elements. The idea of Edbury, such as he was, would have afflicted me with no jealous pangs: but I had to contemplate him through the eyes of the woman who had chosen him: I could not divorce him from her.

I tried recourse to my brain; I thought calmly—she has a poor mind; I have always known it. The word 'always' seized me on a whirlwind, sweeping me backward through the years of our common life to the multitude of incidents, untasted in their sweetness then, to pour it out now like gall.

Ottilia's worldly and intellectual rank both had been constantly present to temper my cravings; but Janet was on my level—mentally a trifle below it, morally above—hard as metal if she liked. She invited conflicts, she defied subjugation. My old grandfather was right: she would be a true man's mate. All the more reason for withdrawing her from that loose-lipped Edbury.

He had the Bolton blood: I remembered Colonel Heddon's anecdote of the mother.

My old grandfather said of Janet, "She's a compassionate thing." I felt the tears under his speech, and how late I was in getting wisdom. Compassion for Edbury in Janet's bosom was Lady Kane's chief engine of assault, so my aunt Dorothy told me. Lady Ilchester had been for this suitor, Sir Roderick for the other, up to the verge of a quarrel between the most united of wedded couples. Janet was persecuted. She heard that Edbury's life was running to waste; she liked him for his cricketing and hunting, his frankness, seeming manliness, and general native English enthusiasm. I permitted myself to comprehend the case as far as I could allow myself to excuse her.

I went to her house after the lapse of a day. She met me quietly and kindly, but with I know not what hostility of reserve, whose apparent threat of resistance challenged an attack.

"Why do you frown at me?" I commenced.

"Have you forgotten my old habit, Harry? I'm not quite cured of it," she answered.

"You will soon have nothing to frown at."

She smiled.

"That sounds like a promise of heaven. Do you mean that I shall not see you, Harry?"

"My dear Janet, I have to tell you this. But first let me ask you: You hold yourself irrevocably plighted to this man Edbury?"

"Yes."

"You have sworn your oath?"

"I do not swear oaths."

"Then you are exceedingly unlike the partner you have selected. You fancy you are bound in honour?"

"I am."

"If you were to learn that you had committed an error, you would still hold yourself bound to take the step?"

"I should hold myself bound not to punish him for my mistake."

"It would not be to punish him to marry him without respecting him!"

"I don't know," said she, suddenly letting her wits break down, and replying like a sullen child at a task; a swing of her skirts would have completed the nice resemblance.

"Well then, Janet, let me tell you I don't respect, and have strong reasons for disliking, the man you propose to yourself for your husband, and therefore, if you become the man's wife——"

"You knew him years ago, Harry. He is different——"

"You imagine you have performed miracles!"

"No, I think most young men are alike." She added softly, "in some things."

This was her superior knowledge of mankind, entirely drawn from my old grandfather's slips of con-

versation regarding the ways of men, in the presence of the country-bred girl.

"You know nothing whatever of him or us," said I.

She answered, "I know as much as I care to hear."

"Concerning the remainder, it doesn't matter?"

"At least, he has not deceived me."

"He must have pushed his confidences beyond the customary limit!"

"Harry, can you say that he is much worse than other young men?"

It was in the attitude of an inquisitor that I received the thrust full in the breast from my own weapon. Is there, indeed, a choice for purely-trained young women among the flock of males?—if we would offer ourselves to their discriminating eyes as fitting mates upon the ground of purity!

"Oh, quite as intelligent—quite as noble!" I covered my retreat, feeling myself trotting in couples with Edbury and his like, as though at her command.

It enraged me. My conduct grew execrable. I made hot love to her, merely to win one clasp of the lost figure in my arms. She listened, fenced, frowned, reddened, and, perhaps, learnt to know more of men in a minute than she had through the course of her life. Who could respect Edbury's betrothed?

She seemed to apprehend what was overshadowing me: she said: "Harry, it's the loss of my respect for you that's the cruellest."

But she could not rob me of my savage consolation in having fixed a permanent blush on her face. Let the wretch redden for her idiot lover; this bit of crimson was mine. I had stolen a trifle.

The trifle became a boundless treasure, a relic, a horrible back-thought, a thing with a sting, all in the space of a few breathings. I had no pleasure of it, no more than a wild beast has of its bolted meal. Passion has none when you let it run counter to love.

"Harry, I leave you," she said, not ungently; rather to provoke my gentleness.

"Good-by, Janet," I replied.

"We shall see you to-day? to-morrow?"

"Hardly."

She sighed:

"You know your power."

"Power! if I could keep you from throwing yourself away on this fellow, I would renounce every chance of my own. Don't speak to me in those undertones. If you look at me in that manner I won't answer for myself. You tempt me to believe you the faithfullest woman alive; I go abroad, I return to you to lay my life at your feet, and I find I am not to touch you, only to see you at stated hours; you've ring-fenced yourself with the coronet of the loosest titled dog in the country. Was I right or wrong in coming to you, supposing you always true to me; who taught me to think her faithful unto death?"

Janet bent her head.

"I may be a little guilty," she said.

My bounding paradoxes, which were like reason playing contortionist with its cranium between its heels, gained that confession from her. So there had been a struggle and a sense of infidelity in her heart! But the confession of 'a little guilt' coloured her to my blacker taste: the wild beast sprang for another meal.

She submitted; I paid the cost of it. Dead lips, an unyielding shape and torture on the forehead, make up a vulture's feast.

She left me without a word.

What could she think of me! Madness must have stricken me, and none of the illusions of madness to divert the pain.

I went to my chambers. Behold the carriage of Lady Kane at the door of the house!

"Oh! you really were out!" cried she, staccato. "Why didn't you keep your appointment, naughty fellow? Here, step in, and you shall tell me fie-fie stories of the harem, if you like."

I excused myself for declining the honour, bluntly: whereupon she proceeded to business:—My father was very much in the way in Janet's house. Did I not think it severe upon an ardent lover that neither his relatives nor he himself were permitted to call on her except at hours when it pleased a broken invalid to have a nap. That was all she had to say: I had looked after him so long, that in her opinion I was the best nurse possible for him.

I told her I shared the opinion, and I referred her to Janet.

"Oh! dear me, no, I've had enough of that," she said, shuddering ludicrously.

I felt myself a sharer in her particular sentiments likewise.

Her fury for my delightful society was not to be appeased save by the 'positive' promise that I would at once take my father under my own care.

Again I sent for him, hoping to see Janet's handwriting, and taste a new collision.

My aunt Dorothy came.

"Harry, you meant your letter for a command?"

She pressed her bosom for breath.

"The simplest in the world, aunty. My father ought to be with me. He is well-cared for, but he is liable to insult."

"No one is allowed to call but when he is upstairs."

"Yes, so I've heard. I suppose he wishes me to be near him, and as things are you must be aware that I can't well be visiting Janet. And, finally, I have decided on it."

"Do you forget Janet's good influence over him, Harry?"

"On the whole, I don't think it better than mine."

"You are resolved?"

"Quite resolved."

"Then I must let you know the truth. I disobey Janet——"

"A miraculous tyrant, upon my honour!"

"In anything that touches your happiness, Harry, yes; as far as she may be now."

Dorothy Beltham waxed strangely agitated. I kissed her and held both her hands.

"It is this, dear Harry; bear to hear it! Janet and I and his good true woman of a housekeeper, whose name is Waddy, we are, I believe, the only persons that know it. He had a large company to dine at a City tavern, she told us, on the night after the decision—when the verdict went against him. The following morning I received a note from this good Mrs. Waddy addressed to Sir Roderick's London house, where I was staying with Janet; it said that he was ill; and Janet put on her bonnet at once to go to him."

"The lady didn't fear contagion any longer?"

"She went, walking fast. He was living in lodgings, and the people of the house insisted on removing him, Mrs. Waddy told us. She was cowering in the parlour. I had not the courage to go upstairs. Janet went by herself."

My heart rose on a huge swell.

"She was alone with him, Harry. We could hear them."

Dorothy Beltham looked imploringly on me to waken my whole comprehension.

"She subdued him. When I saw him he was white as death, but quiet, not dangerous at all."

"Do you mean she found him raving?" I cried out on our Maker's name, in grief and horror.

"Yes, dear Harry, it was so."

"She stepped between him and an asylum?"

"She quitted Sir Roderick's house to lodge your father safe in one that she hired, and have him under her own care. She watched him day and night for three weeks, and governed him, assisted only at intervals by the poor frightened woman, Mrs. Waddy, and just as frightened me. And I am still subject to the poor woman's way of pressing her hand to her heart at a noise. It's over now. Harry, Janet wished that you should never hear of it. She dreads any excitement for him. I think she is right in fancying her own influence the best: he is used to it. You know how gentle she is though she is so firm."

"Oh! don't torture me, ma'am, for God's sake," I called aloud.

CHAPTER XVI.

MY SUBJECTION.

My aunt Dorothy required good proof that the malady she spoke of had not fallen upon me likewise.

The state of her feelings upon that subject could barely be hidden when she took my arm to walk back to Janet's house. My outcries of misery and perdition had unnerved her.

I said as calmly as possible: "You mentioned her gentleness and firmness, aunty; that set me off. Don't you understand? You needn't be alarmed."

"I understand there is a contrast," Dorothy Beltham said.

Explanations were fruitless to reveal to her how such a contrast so simply spoken would act upon a lover situated as I was, hearing what I heard.

Janet gave me her hand again. I took it with bloodless fingers.

I could not but tell her of the load of debt she laid me under.

"Since you know of it, dear Harry," she said, "you

will agree with me that I am likely to be the best nurse for the present."

"You cannot continue it long."

"While I can."

So long as she was free, that meant.

She could scarcely have discovered a method of phrasing it so as not to imply the grievous indication. I was but half cured in spirit, and in heart all one wound: any breath blowing on me from her did me a hurt.

I held a fair way for a time between gentleness and brutality, and then said abruptly: "'While you can.' I don't know the date."

"What date, Harry?"

"Of your marriage."

"It is named for next month."

"It is? that is to say, *you* have named next month and the day of it. I'm thinking of my father. He will have to come to me some days before. You will have to look to your dresses, et cætera. The Marquis of Edbury had the habit, owing to an infantine fondness for amusement, of treating your patient upstairs to his notions of fun."

"They do not meet."

"I know they do not. But while my father is here —'while you can' look after him, he may instigate the Marquis's lively mind to talk of him—volubly, is quite within his capacity."

Irony was loss of pains: she might have been

susceptible to the irony of thunder not too finely distilled.

So I thought, seeing her unmoved.

She answered to the point.

"He is not what he was. I hoped you would be friendly to him, Harry, to please me."

"And I will be, to please you."

Soft delight shone through fresh surprise in her face.

These must have been the first kind words I had spoken to her since my return to England.

Happily for myself, I had not to accuse my heart of intending them two-edged.

I dropped into a flat sincerity like a condition of stupor.

The description of the bond of alliance between Janet and Edbury—could it by any ingenuity be analyzed? Not without once beholding them together. I waited for that dreary spectacle to gain the bitter advance in wisdom for which I thirsted. Even to so low a condition did I descend, who had once made of each day a step in philosophy, dragging a heart, it was true, but not the slave of my burden.

There came to me a little note on foreign paper, unaddressed, an enclosure forwarded by Janet, and containing merely one scrap from the playful XENIEN of Ottilia's favourite brotherly poets, of untranslatable flavour:—

> Who shuns true friends flies fortune in the concrete:
> Would he see what he aims at? let him ask his heels.

It filled me with a breath of old German peace.

From this I learnt that Ottilia and Janet corresponded. Upon what topics? to what degree of intimacy?

Janet now confessed to me that their intimacy had never known reserve. The princess had divined her attachment for Harry Richmond when their acquaintance was commenced in the island, and knew at the present moment that I had travelled round to the recognition of Janet's worth.

Thus encouraged by the princess's changeless friendship, I wrote to her, leaving little to be guessed of my state of mind, withholding nothing of the circumstances surrounding me. Imagination dealt me all my sharpest misery, and now that Ottilia resumed her place there, I became infinitely peacefuller, and stronger to subdue my hungry nature. It caused me no pang, strangely though it read in my sight when written, to send warm greetings and respects to the prince her husband.

I could afterwards meet the Marquis of Edbury with sufficient self-containment to make civility an easy matter, nay, to be glad of the improvement manifest in him. He paid his betrothed a morning visit. I had been summoned early to the house to see my father, and had stepped down from his bed-room. The meeting was a surprise. Janet stood up to make the best of it. Edbury came to me affably, much less in his reeling style, with the freshest of faces, 'jocund,' if you like; a

real morning air, allowing for the redolent cosmetics and tobacco upon his person.

"Delighted to see you, Richmond. Brown as a Turk, by Jove! How are you? Fellows that go to the East come back like brown-paper parcels marked 'fire-works:' you never can get anything out of them except with a lucifer. Lots to tell? We had jolly hunting this year. If ever I go it won't be in the winter; I'm headlong for winter in England; so's Janet. She and I usually lead the field, and when you're alone with a woman at the tail of the hounds on a straight scent, by Jove, it's awfully jolly!"

These were his memorable words. He had not yet mastered the whole of our alphabet, certain consonants of which I supply for him.

Janet talked rapidly with him. She treated him as a lad.

Expression of any ulterior sentiment regarding him in her bosom she showed me none. Many a high-flying young lady similarly situated would, I suspect, have propitiated the critical third person of the three with some slight token of individual loftiness. I should have relished her better at the moment had she done so. She appeared to me like a humane upper-boy, who has an odd liking for a lively dolt—to be accounted for by the latter having a pretty sister at home.

He succeeded, however, in persuading her to drive to the North and South Cricket-Match. Perhaps she wished to give me a sign of her dependency: I could not tell.

At night she sent for me. The hour was late, the case urgent. I sympathized with Lady Ilchester in her desire that Janet should be spared the task of watching my father; it inflicted a grave and ceaseless anxiety, and, as he constantly cried for me in my absence, I thought I might take him; but my aunt Dorothy said his call for Janet was wilder.

I found that Janet had soothed him to sleep. All the household were at rest. We sat together on the central ottoman of the drawing-room, conversing at intervals with low voices. The physicians declared my father's affliction to be one of the nerves, not of the brain, she said; and confirmed their opinion from her own experience. She was very tired, but could not sleep—was happy, she said, now that I was in the house, and betweenwhiles shut her eyes, breathing deeply, and opened them wide to listen. No sound disturbed us. The nurse attending on him came down once to inform us that he slept still.

"Harry, this is nice, our sitting so quiet here," Janet said.

"You sigh."

"I am tired, Harry."

"Why not go to bed?"

"I can't: I shall not sleep."

"He will soon be on my hands."

"Let me think you will not have trouble, Harry."

Her look was sorrowful: I steeled my heart to endurance.

Is it any waste of time to write of love? The trials of life are in it, but in a narrow ring and a fierier. You may learn to know yourself through love, as you do after years of life, whether you are fit to lift them that are about you, or whether you are but a cheat, and a load on the backs of your fellows. The impure perishes, the inefficient languishes, the moderate comes to its autumn of decay—these are of the kinds which aim at satisfaction to die of it soon or late. The love that survives has strangled craving; it lives because it lives to nourish and succour like the heavens.

But to strangle craving is indeed to go through a death before you reach your immortality.

Janet and I sat long into the night, not uttering one word of love.

"Morning's outside," I said.

She answered, "I don't know what morning is."

"You have a dark line under your eyes."

"My own doing."

"Mine."

"Then it will not disfigure me."

We gazed at the clock on the mantelpiece, named the hour, and forgot the hour.

When we parted she kissed me—she bent over to me at half arm's-length, and put her lips to my cheek.

Might I then have overcome her resolution by taking advantage of the thankful tenderness which blessed me for respecting her?

Forms of violation that trample down another's will

are pardonable—can well be justified in the broad working world, considering what it is composed of. If you admit the existence of a more delicate and a higher world, you understand that I did not lose by abnegation. My love for my Janet partly slipped the senses into reason, and pity and esteem brought back hers for me. In plainer words, I began to love her as an honest man should love; she me, as a plighted woman should not, and the struggle in me diminished, in her was greater.

CHAPTER XVII.

I MEET MY FIRST PLAYFELLOW AND TAKE MY PUNISHMENT.

I WAS taken by Temple down to the ship-smelling East of London, for the double purpose of trying to convince Captain Welsh of the extravagance of a piece of chivalry he was about to commit, and of seeing a lady with a history, who had recently come under his guardianship. Temple thought I should know her, but he made a mystery of it until the moment of our introduction arrived, not being certain of her identity, and not wishing to have me disappointed. It appeared that Captain Welsh questioned his men closely after he had won his case, and he arrived at the conclusion that two or three of them had been guilty of false swearing in his interests. He did not dismiss them, for, as he said, it was twice a bad thing to turn sinners loose: it was to shove them out of the direct road of amendment, and it was a wrong to the population. He insisted, however, on paying the legal costs and an indemnity for the collision at sea; and Temple was in great distress about it, he having

originally suggested the suspicion of his men to Captain Welsh. "I wanted to put him on his guard against those rascals," Temple said, "and I suppose," he sighed, "I wanted the old captain to think me enormously clever all round." He shook himself, and assumed a bearish aspect, significant of disgust and recklessness. "The captain 'll be ruined, Richie; and he's not young, you know, to go on sailing his barque Priscilla, for ever. If he pays, why, I ought to pay, and then you ought to pay, for I shouldn't have shown off before him alone, and then the wind that fetched you ought to pay. Toss common sense overboard, there's no end to your fine-drawings; that's why it's always safest to swear by the judge."

We rolled down to the masts among the chimneys on the top of an omnibus. The driver was eloquent on cricket-matches. Now, cricket, he said, was fine manly sport; it might kill a man, but it never meant mischief: foreigners themselves had a bit of an idea that it was the best game in the world, though it was a nice joke to see a foreigner playing at it! None of them could stand to be bowled at. Hadn't stomachs for it: they'd have to train for soldiers first. On one occasion he had seen a Frenchman looking on at a match. "Ball was hit a shooter twixt the slips: off starts Frenchman, catches it, heaves it up, like his head, half-way to wicket, and all the field set to bawling at him, and sending him, we knew where. He tripped off: 'You no comprong politeness in dis country.' Ha! ha!"

To prove the aforesaid Frenchman wrong, we nodded to the driver's laughter at his exquisite imitation.

He informed us that he had backed the Surrey Eleven last year, owing to the report of a gentleman-bowler, who had done things in the way of tumbling wickets to tickle the ears of cricketers. Gentlemen-batters were common; gentlemen-bowlers were quite another dish. Saddlebank was the gentleman's name.

"Old Nandrew Saddle?" Temple called to me, and we smiled at the supposition of Saddlebank's fame, neither of us, from what we had known of his bowling, doubting that he deserved it.

"Acquainted with him, gentlemen?" the driver inquired, touching his hat. "Well, and I ask why don't more gentlemen take to cricket? 'stead of horses all round the year! Now, there's my notion of happiness," said the man condemned to inactivity, in the perpetual act of motion; "cricket in cricket season! It comprises —count: lots o' running; and that's good: just enough o' taking it easy; that's good: a appetite for your dinner, and your ale or your port, as may be the case; good, number three. Add on a tired pipe after dark, and a sound sleep to follow, and you say good morning to the doctor and the parson; for you're in health body and soul, and ne'er a parson 'll make a better Christian of ye, that I'll swear."

As if anxious not to pervert us, he concluded: "That's what *I* think, gentlemen."

Temple and I talked of the ancient raptures of a

first of May cricketing-day on a sunny green meadow, with an ocean of a day before us, and well-braced spirits for the match. I had the vision of a matronly, but not much altered Janet, mounted on horseback, to witness the performance of some favourite Eleven of youngsters with her connoisseur's eye; and then the model of an English lady, wife, and mother, waving adieu to the field and cantering home to entertain her husband's guests. Her husband!

Temple was aware of my grief, but saw no remedy. I knew that in his heart he thought me justly punished, though he loved me.

We had a long sitting with Captain Welsh, whom I found immovable, as I expected I should. His men, he said, had confessed their sin similarly to the crab in a hole, with one claw out, as the way of sinners was. He blamed himself mainly. "Where you have accidents, Mr. Richmond, you have faults; and where you have faults aboard a ship you may trace a line to the captain. I should have treated my ship's crew like my conscience, and *gone through them nightly*. As it is, sir, here comes round one of your accidents to tell me I have lived blinded by conceit. That is my affliction, my young friend. The payment of the money is no more so than to restore money held in trust."

Temple and I argued the case with him, as of old on our voyage, on board the barque Priscilla, quite unavailingly.

"Is a verdict built on lies one that my Maker

approves of?" said he. "If I keep possession of that money, my young friends, will it clothe me? Ay, with stings! Will it feed me? Ay, with poison. And they that should be having it shiver and want!"

He was emphatic, as he would not have been, save to read as an example, owing to our contention with him. "The money is Satan in my very hands!" When he had dismissed the subject he never returned to it.

His topic of extreme happiness, to which Temple led him, was the rescue of a beautiful sinner from a life of shame. It appeared that Captain Welsh had the habit between his voyages of making one holiday expedition to the spot of all creation he thought the fairest, Richmond Hill, overlooking the Thames; and there, one evening, he espied a lady in grief, and spoke to her, and gave her consolation. More, he gave her a blameless home. The lady's name was Mabel Bolton. She was in distress of spirit rather than of circumstances, for temptation was thick about one so beautiful, to supply the vanities and luxuries of the father of sin. He described her.

She was my first play-fellow, the miller's daughter of Dipwell, Mabel Sweetwinter, taken from her home by Lord Edbury during my German university career, and now put away by him upon command of Lady Kane on the eve of his marriage.

She herself related her history to me, after telling me that she had seen me once at the steps of Edbury's

club. Our meeting was no great surprise to either of us. She had heard my name as that of an expected visitor; she had seen Temple, moreover, and he had prompted me with her Christian name and the praise of her really glorious hair, to anticipate the person who was ushered into the little cabin-like parlour by Captain Welsh's good old mother.

Of Edbury she could not speak for grief, believing that he loved her still and was acting under compulsion. Her long and faithful attachment to the scapegrace seemed to preserve her from the particular regrets Captain Welsh supposed to occupy her sinner's mind; so that, after some minutes of the hesitation and strangeness due to our common recollections, she talked of him simply and well—as befitted her situation, a worldling might say. But she did not conceal her relief in escaping to this quaint little refuge (she threw a kindly-comical look, not overtoned, at the miniature ships on the mantelpiece, and the picture of Joseph leading Mary with her babe on the ass) from the temptations I could imagine a face like hers would expose her to. The face was splendid, the figure already overblown. I breathed some thanks to my father while she and I conversed apart. The miller was dead, her brother in America. She had no other safe home than the one Captain Welsh had opened to her. When I asked her (I had no excuse for it) whether she would consent to go to Edbury again, she reddened and burst into tears. I cursed my brutality. "Let her cry," said Captain Welsh on parting with us

at his street-door. "Tears are the way of women and their comfort."

To our astonishment he told us he intended to take her for a voyage in the Priscilla. "Why?" we asked.

"I take her," he said, "because not to do things wholly is worse than not to do things at all, for it's waste of time and cause for a chorus below, down in hell, my young friends. The woman is beautiful as Solomon's bride. She is weak as water. And the man is wicked. He has written to her a letter. He would have her reserved for himself, a wedded man: such he is, or is soon to be. I am searching, and she is not deceitful; and I am a poor man again and must go the voyage. I wrestled with her, and by grace I conquered her to come with me of a free will, and be out of his snares. Aboard I do not fear him, and she shall know the mercy of the Lord on high seas."

We grimaced a little on her behalf, but had nothing to reply.

Seeing Janet after Mabel was strange. In the latter one could perceive the palpably suitable mate for Edbury. I felt that my darling was insulted, but there were no amends for it. I had to keep silent and mark the remorseless preparations going forward. Not so Heriot. He had come over from the camp in Ireland on leave at this juncture. His talk of women still suggested the hawk with the downy feathers of the last little plucked bird sticking to his beak; but his appreciation of Janet and some kindness for me made him a vehement opponent of

her resolve. He took licence of his friendship to lay every incident before her to complete his persuasions. She resisted his attacks, as I knew she would, obstinately, and replied to his entreaties with counter-supplications that he should urge me to accept old Riversley. The conflicts went on between those two daily, and I heard of them from Heriot at night. He refused to comprehend her determination under the head of anything save madness. Varied by reproaches of me for my former inveterate blindness, he raved upon Janet's madness incessantly, swearing that he would not be beaten. I told him his efforts were useless, but thought them friendly, and so they were, only Janet's resistance had fired his vanity, and he stalked up and down my room talking a mixture of egregious coxcombry and hearty good sense that might have shown one the cause he meant to win had become personal to him. Temple, who was sometimes in consultation with him, and was always amused by his quasi-fanfaronnade, assured me that Heriot was actually scheming. The next we heard of him was that he had been seen at a whitebait hotel down the river drunk with Edbury. Janet also heard of that, and declined to see Heriot again. I received a smart letter on the subject from Lady Kane, glad that in my conscience I could despise it. The old woman worked zealously for her monkey, as she called him. I contrasted her labours with those of my friends; Temple with a wig on half his time, and Heriot the boastful emptying bottles. Other friends, notably Charles

Etherell, were kind in what they said of the prospects of a future career for me; but a young man does not commonly realize a prospect without the vision of himself in it, and the Harry Richmond of the days to come appeared a stricken wretch, a bare half of a man, a sight from which one gladly turns one's face to the wall.

Our last days marched frightfully fast. Janet had learnt that any the most distant allusion to her marriage-day was an anguish to the man who was not to marry her, so it was through my aunt Dorothy that I became aware of Julia Bulsted's kindness in offering to take charge of my father for a term. Lady Sampleman undertook to be hostess to him for one night, the eve of Janet's nuptials. He was quiet, unlikely to give annoyance to persons not strongly predisposed to hear sentences finished and exclamations fall into their right places.

Adieu to my darling! There have been women well won; here was an adorable woman well lost. After twenty years of slighting her, did I fancy she would turn to me and throw a man over in reward of my ultimate recovery of my senses? Did I fancy that one so tenacious as she had proved would snap a tie depending on her pledged word? She liked Edbury; she saw the best of him, and liked him. The improved young lord was her handiwork. After the years of humiliation from me, she had found herself courted by a young nobleman who clung to her for help, showed improvement, and brought her many compliments from a wondering world.

She really felt that she was strength and true life to him. She resisted Heriot: she resisted a more powerful advocate, and this was the Princess Ottilia. My aunt Dorothy told me that the princess had written. Janet either did or affected to weigh the princess's reasonings; and she did not evade the task of furnishing a full reply. Her resolution was unchanged. Loss of colour, loss of light in her eyes, were the sole signs of what it cost her to maintain it. Our task was to transfer the idea of Janet to that of Julia in my father's whirling brain, which at first rebelled violently, and cast it out like a stick thrust between rapidly revolving wheels. He said things that would have melted another than iron Janet.

The night before I was to take him away, she gave me her hand, with a "good-by, dear Harry." My words were much the same. She had a ghastly face, but could not have known it, for she smiled, and tried to keep the shallow smile in play, as friends do. There was the end.

It came abruptly, and was schoolingly cold and short.

It had the effect on me of freezing my blood and setting what seemed to be the nerves of my brain at work in a fury of calculation to reckon the minutes remaining of her maiden days. I had expected nothing, but now we had parted I thought that one last scene to break my heart on should not have been denied to me. My aunt Dorothy was a mute; she wept when I spoke of Janet, whatever it was I said.

The minutes ran on from circumstance to circumstance of the destiny Janet had marked for herself, each

one rounded in my mind of a blood colour like the edge about prismatic hues. I lived through them a thousand times before they occurred, as the wretch who fears death dies multitudinously.

Some womanly fib preserved my father from a shock on leaving Janet's house. She left it herself at the same time that she drove him to Lady Sampleman's, and I found him there soon after she had gone to her bridesmaids. A letter was for me:—

"DEAR HARRY—

"I shall not live at Riversley, never go there again; do not let it be sold to a stranger; it will happen unless you go there. For the sake of the neighbourhood and poor people, I cannot allow it to be shut up. I was the cause of the chief misfortune. You never blamed me. Let me think that the old place is not dead. Adieu,

"Your affectionate,

"JANET."

I tore the letter to pieces, and kept them.

The aspect of the new intolerable world I was to live in after to-morrow, paralyzed sensation. My father chattered, Lady Sampleman hushed him; she said I might leave him to her, and I went down to Captain Welsh to bid him good-by and get such peace as contact with a man clad in armour proof against earthly calamity could give.

I was startled to see little Kiomi in Mabel's company.

They had met accidentally at the head of the street, and had been friends in childhood, Captain Welsh said, adding: "She hates men."

"Good reason, when they're beasts," said Kiomi.

He looked at the babe in her arms.

Kiomi sucked her throat in at a question of mine.

"I shan't do you mischief this time," she said.

Amid much weeping of Mabel and old Mrs. Welsh, Kiomi showed as little trouble as the heath when the woods are swept.

Captain Welsh wanted Mabel to be on board early, owing, he told me, to information. Kiomi had offered to remain on board with her until the captain was able to come. He had business to do in the City.

We saw them off from the waterside.

"Were I to leave that young woman behind me, on shore, I should be giving the devil warrant to seize upon his prey," said Captain Welsh, turning his gaze from the boat which conveyed Kiomi and Mabel to the barque Priscilla. He had information that the misleader of her youth was hunting her.

He and I parted, and for ever, at a corner of cross-ways in the central city. There I saw the last of one who deemed it as simple a matter to renounce his savings for old age to rectify an error of justice, as to plant his foot on the pavement; a man whose only burden was the folly of men.

I thought to myself in despair, under what protest can I also escape from England and my own intemperate

mind? It seemed a miraculous answer:—There lay at my chambers a note written by Count Lika, stating that his chief wished to see me urgently, and I went to the embassy, and heard of an Austrian ship of war being at one of our ports upon an expedition to the East, and was introduced to the captain, a gentlemanly fellow, like most of the officers of his Government. Finding in me a German scholar, and a joyful willingness, he engaged me to take the post of secretary to the expedition in the place of the invalided Freiherr von Redwitz, whose short experience of sea-voyaging down the Adriatic and across our channel had sickened him. The bargain was struck immediately: I was to be ready to report myself to the captain on board not later than the following day. Count Kesensky led me aside: he regretted that he could do nothing better for me; but I thought his friendliness extreme and astonishing, and said so; whereupon the count assured me that his intentions were good, though he had not been of great use hitherto —an allusion to the borough of Chippenden: he had only heard of von Redwitz's illness that afternoon. I thanked him cordially, saying I was much in his debt, and he bowed me out, letting me fancy, as my father had fancied before me, and as though I had never observed and reflected in my life, that the opportuneness of this intervention signified a special action of Providence. The flattery of the thought served for an elixir. But with whom would my father abide during my absence? Captain Bulsted and Julia saved me from a

fit of remorse; they had come up to town on purpose to carry him home with them, and had left a message on my table, and an invitation to dinner at their hotel, where the name of Janet was the Marino Faliero of our review of Riversley people and old times. The captain and his wife were indignant at her conduct. Since, however, I chose to excuse it, they said they would say nothing more about her, and she was turned face to the wall. I told them how Janet had taken him for months. "But I'll take him for years," said Julia. "The truth is, Harry, my old dear! William and I are never so united—for I'm ashamed to quarrel with him—as when your father's at Bulsted. He belongs to us, and other people shall know you're not obliged to depend on your family for help, and your aunt Dorothy can come and see him whenever she likes." That was settled. Captain Bulsted went with me to Lady Sampleman's to prepare my father for the change of nurse and residence. We were informed that he had gone down with Alderman Duke Saddlebank to dine at one of the great City Companies' halls. I could hardly believe it. "Ah! my dear Mr. Harry," said Lady Sampleman, "old friends know one another best, believe that, now. I treated him as if he was as well as ever he was, gave him his turtle and madeira lunch; and Alderman Saddlebank, who lunched here—your father used to say, he looks like a robin hopping out of a larder—quite jumped to dine him in the City like old times; and he will see a great spread of plate!"

She thought my father only moderately unwell, wanting novelty. Captain Bulsted agreed with me that it would be prudent to go and fetch him. At the door of the City hall stood Andrew Saddlebank, grown to be simply a larger edition of Rippenger's head boy, and he imparted to us that my father was "on his legs" delivering a speech. It alarmed me. With Saddlebank's assistance I pushed in.

"A prince! a treacherous lover! an unfatherly man!"

Those were the words I caught. Conceive my amazement to hear the reproduction of many of my phrases employed in our arguments on this very subject!

He bade his audience to beware of princes, beware of idle princes; and letting his florid fancy loose on these eminent persons, they were at one moment silver lamps, at another poising hawks, and again sprawling pumpkins; anything except useful citizens. How could they be? They had the attraction of the lamp, the appetite of the hawk, the occupation of the pumpkin: nothing was given them to do but to shine, destroy, and fatten. Their hands were kept empty: a trifle in their heads would topple them over; they were monuments of the English system of compromise. Happy for mankind if they were monuments only! Happy for them! But they had the passions of men. The adulation of the multitude was raised to inflate them, whose self-respect had not one prop to rest on, unless it were contempt for the flatterers and prophetic foresight of their

perfidy. They were the monuments of a compromise between the past and terror of the future; puppets as princes, mannikins as men, the snares of frail women, stop-gaps of the State, feathered nonentities!

So far (but not in epigram) he marshalled the things he had heard to his sound of drum and trumpet, like one repeating a lesson off-hand. Steering on a sudden completely round, he gave his audience an outline of the changes He would have effected had he but triumphed in his cause; and now came the lashing of arms, a flood of eloquence. Princes with brains, princes leaders, princes flowers of the land, he had offered them! princes that should sway assemblies, and not stultify the precepts of a decent people "by making you pay in the outrage of your morals for what you seem to gain in policy." These or similar words. The whole scene was too grotesque and afflicting. But his command of his hearers was extraordinary, partly a consolation I thought, until, having touched the arm of one of the gentlemen of the banquet and said, "I am his son; I wish to remove him," the reply enlightened me: "I'm afraid there's danger in interrupting him; I really am."

They were listening obediently to one whom they dared not interrupt for fear of provoking an outburst of madness!

I had to risk it. His dilated eyes looked ready to seize on me for an illustration. I spoke peremptorily, and he bowed his head low, saying, "My son, gentlemen," and submitted himself to my hands. The feasters

showed immediately that they felt released by rising and chatting in groups. Alderman Saddlebank expressed much gratitude to me for the service I had performed. "That first half of your father's speech was the most pathetic thing I ever heard!" I had not shared his privilege, and could not say; it may have been good. The remark was current that a great deal was true of what had been said of the Fitzs. My father leaned heavily on my arm with the step and bent head of an ancient pensioner of the Honourable City Company. He was Julia Bulsted's charge, and I was on board the foreign vessel weighing anchor from England before dawn of Janet's marriage-day.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

THE wind was high that morning. The rain came in gray rings, through which we worked on the fretted surface of crumbling seas, heaving up and plunging, without an outlook.

I remember having thought of the barque Priscilla as I watched our lithe Dalmatians slide along the drenched decks of the Verona frigate. At night it blew a gale. I could imagine it to have been sent providentially to brush the torture of the land from my mind, and make me feel that men are trifles.

What are their passions, then? The storm in the clouds—even more short-lived than the clouds.

I philosophized, but my anguish was great.

Janet's "Good-by, Harry," ended everything I lived for, and seemed to strike the day, and bring out of it the remorseless rain. A featureless day, like those before the earth was built; like night under an angry moon; and each day the same until we touched the edge of a southern circle and saw light, and I could use my brain.

The matter most present to me was my injustice regarding my poor father's speech in the City hall. He had caused me to suffer so much that I generally felt for myself when he appealed for sympathy, or provoked some pity: but I was past suffering, and letting kindly recollection divest the speech of its verbiage, I took it to my heart. It was true that he had in his blind way struck the key-note of his position, much as I myself had conceived it before. Harsh trials had made me think of my own fortunes more than of his. This I felt, and I thought there never had been so moving a speech. It seemed to make the world in debt to us. What else is so consolatory to a ruined man?

In reality the busy little creature within me, whom we call self, was digging pits for comfort to flow in, of any kind, in any form; and it seized on every idea, every circumstance, to turn it to that purpose, and with such success that when by-and-by I learnt how entirely inactive special providence had been in my affairs, I had to collect myself before I could muster the conception of gratitude towards the noble woman who clothed me in the illusion. It was to the Princess Ottilia, acting through Count Kesensky, that I owed both my wafting away from England at a wretched season, and my chance of a career in Parliament! The captain of the Verona hinted as much when, after a year and nine months of voyaging, we touched at an East Indian seaport, and von Redwitz joined the vessel to resume the post I was occupying. Von Redwitz (the son of Prince Ernest's

Chancellor, I discovered) could have told me more than he did, but he handed me a letter from the princess, calling me home urgently, and even prescribing my route, and bidding me come straight to Germany and to Sarkeld. The summons was distasteful, for I had settled into harness under my scientific superiors, and had proved to my messmates that I was neither morose nor over-conceited. Captain Martinitz, however, persuaded me to return, and besides, there lay between the lines of Ottilia's letter a signification of welcome things better guessed at than known. Was I not bound to do her bidding? Others had done it: young von Redwitz, for instance, in obeying the telegraph wires and feigning sickness to surrender his place to me, when she wished to save me from misery by hurrying me to new scenes with a task for my hand and head;—no mean stretch of devotion on his part. Ottilia was still my princess; she my providence. She wrote:—

"Come home, my friend Harry: you have been absent too long. He who intercepts you to displace you has his career before him in the vessel, and you nearer home. The home is always here where I am, but it may now take root elsewhere, and it is from Ottilia you hear that delay is now really loss of life. I tell you no more. You know me, that when I say come, it is enough."

A simple adieu and her name ended the mysterious letter. Not a word of Prince Hermann. What had happened? I guessed at it curiously and incessantly,

and only knew the nature of my suspicion by ceasing to hope as soon as I seemed to have divined it. I did not wrong my soul's high mistress beyond the one flash of tentative apprehension which in perplexity struck at impossibilities. Ottilia would never have summoned me to herself. But was Janet free? The hope which refused to live in that other atmosphere of purest calm, sprang to full stature at the bare thought, and would not be extinguished though all the winds beset it. Had my girl's courage failed, to spare her at the last moment? I fancied it might be: I was sure it was not so. Yet the doubt pressed on me with the force of a world of unimagined shifts and chances, and just kept the little flame alive, at times intoxicating me, though commonly holding me back to watch its forlorn conflict with probabilities known too well. It cost me a struggle to turn aside to Germany from the Italian highroad. I chose the line of the Brenner, and stopped half a day at Innsbrück to pay a visit to Colonel Heddon, of whom I had the joyful tidings that two of his daughters were away to go through the German form of the betrothal of one of them to an Englishman. The turn of the tide had come to him. And it comes to me, too, in a fresh spring tide whenever I have to speak of others instead of this everlastingly recurring I of the autobiographer, of which the complacent penman has felt it to be his duty to expose the mechanism when out of action, and which, like so many of our sins of commission, appears in the shape of a terrible offence when the occasion for con-

tinuing it draws to a close. The pleasant narrator in the first person is the happy bubbling fool, not the philosopher who has come to know himself and his relations towards the universe. The words of this last are one to twenty; his mind is bent upon the causes of events rather than their progress. As you see me on the page now, I stand somewhere between the two, approximating to the former, but with sufficient of the latter within me to tame the delightful expansiveness proper to that coming hour of marriage-bells and bridal-wreaths. It is a sign that the end, and the delivery of reader and writer alike, should not be dallied with. The princess had invited Lucy Heddon to Sarkeld to meet Temple, and Temple to meet me. Onward I flew. I saw the old woods of the lake-palace, and, as it were, the light of my past passion waning above them. I was greeted by the lady of all nobility with her gracious warmth, and in his usual abrupt manful fashion by Prince Hermann. And I had no time to reflect on the strangeness of my stepping freely under the roof where a husband claimed Ottilia, before she led me into the library, where sat my lost and recovered, my darling; and, unlike herself, for a moment faltered in rising and breathing my name. We were alone. I knew she was no bondswoman. The question how it had come to pass lurked behind everything I said and did; speculation on the visible features, and touching of the unfettered hand, restrained me from uttering or caring to utter it. But it was wonderful. It thrust me back on providence

again for the explanation—humbly this time. It was wonderful and blessed, as to loving eyes the first-drawn breath of a drowned creature restored to life. I kissed her hand passionately. "Wait till you have heard everything, Harry," she said, and her voice was deeper, softer, exquisitely strange in its known tones, as her manner was, and her eyes. She was not the blooming, straight-shouldered, high-breathing girl of other days, but sister to the day of her "Good-by, Harry," pale and worn. The eyes had wept. This was Janet, haply widowed. She wore no garb nor a shade of widowhood. Perhaps she had thrown it off, not to offend an implacable temper in me. I said, "I shall hear nothing that can make you other than my own Janet—if you will?"

She smiled a little. "We expected Temple's arrival sooner than yours, Harry."

"Do you take to his Lucy?"

"Yes, thoroughly."

The perfect ring of Janet was there.

Mention of Riversley made her conversation lively, and she gave me moderately good news of my father, quaint, out of Julia Bulsted's latest letter to her.

"Then how long," I asked astonished, "how long have you been staying with the princess?"

She answered, colouring, "So long, that I can speak fairish German."

"And read it easily?"

"I have actually taken to reading, Harry."

Her courage must have quailed, and she must have been looking for me on that morning of miserable aspect when I beheld the last of England through wailful showers, like the scene of a burial. I did not speak of it, fearing to hurt her pride, but said, "Have you been here—months?"

"Yes, some months," she replied.

"Many?"

"Yes," she said, and dropped her eyelids, and then, with a quick look at me, "Wait for Temple, Harry. He is a day behind his time. We can't account for it."

I suggested, half in play, that perhaps he had decided, for the sake of a sea voyage, to come by our old route to Germany on board the barque Priscilla, with Captain Welsh.

A faint shudder passed over her. She shut her eyes and shook her head.

Our interview satisfied my heart's hunger no further. The Verona's erratic voyage had cut me off from letters.

Janet might be a widow, for aught I knew. She was always Janet to me; but why at liberty? why many months at Sarkeld, the guest of the princess? Was she neither maid nor widow—a wife flown from a brutal husband? or separated, and forcibly free? Under such conditions Ottilia would not have commanded my return: but what was I to imagine? A boiling couple of hours divided me from the time for dressing, when, as I meditated, I could put a chance question or two to the man

commissioned to wait on me, and hear whether the English lady was a Fräulein. The Margravine and Prince Ernest were absent. Hermann worked in his museum, displaying his treasures to Colonel Heddon. I sat with the ladies in the airy look-out tower of the lake-palace, a prey to intense speculations, which devoured themselves and changed from fire to smoke, while I recounted the adventures of our ship's voyage, and they behaved as if there were nothing to tell me in turn, each a sphinx holding the secret I thirsted for. I should not certainly have thirsted much if Janet had met me as far half-way as a delicate woman may advance. The mystery lay in her evident affection, and her apparent freedom and unfathomable reserve, and her desire that I should see Temple before she threw off her feminine armour, to which, judging by the indications, Ottilia seemed to me to accede.

My old friend was spied first by his sweetheart Lucy, winding dilatorily over the hill away from Sarkeld, in one of the royal carriages sent to meet him. He was guilty of wasting a prodigious number of minutes with his trumpery "How d'ye do's," and his glances and excuses, and then I had him up in my room, and the tale was told; it was not Temple's fault if he did not begin straightforwardly.

I plucked him from his narrator's vexatious and inevitable commencement: "Temple, tell me, did she go to the altar?"

He answered "Yes."

"She did? Then she's a widow?"

"No, she isn't," said Temple, distracting me by submitting to the lead I distracted him by taking.

"Then her husband's alive?"

Temple denied it, and a devil seized him to perceive some comicality in the dialogue.

"Was she married?"

Temple said "No," with a lurking drollery about his lips. He added, "It's nothing to laugh over, Richie."

"Am I laughing? Speak out. Did Edbury come to grief overnight in any way?"

Again Temple pronounced a negative, this time wilfully enigmatical: he confessed it, and accused me of the provocation. He dashed some laughter with gravity to prepare for my next assault.

"Was Edbury the one to throw up the marriage? Did he decline it?"

"No," was the answer once more.

Temple stopped my wrath by catching at me and begging me to listen. "Edbury was drowned, Richie."

"Overnight?"

"No, not overnight. I can tell it all in half-a-dozen words, if you'll be quiet; and I know you're going to be as happy as I am, or I shouldn't trifle an instant. He went overnight on board the Priscilla to see Mabel Sweetwinter, the only woman he ever could have cared for, and he went the voyage just as we did. He was trapped, caged, and transported; it's a repetition, except

that the poor old Priscilla never came to land. She foundered in a storm in the North Sea. That's all we know. Every soul perished, the captain and all. I knew how it would be with that crew of his some day or other. Don't you remember my saying the Priscilla was the kind of name of a vessel that would go down with all hands, and leave a bottle to float to shore? A bottle was found on our east coast—the old captain must have discovered in the last moments that such things were on board—and in it there was a paper, and the passengers' and crew's names in his handwriting, written as if he had been sitting in his parlour at home; over them a line—'*The Lord's will is about to be done;*' and underneath—'*We go to His judgment resigned and cheerful.*' You know the old captain, Richie?"

Temple had tears in his eyes. We both stood blinking for a second or two.

I could not but be curious to hear the reason for Edbury's having determined to sail.

"Don't you understand how it was, Richie?" said Temple. "Edbury went to persuade her to stay, or just to see her for once, and he came to persuasions. He seems to have been succeeding, but the captain stepped on board, and he treated Edbury as he did us two: he made him take the voyage for discipline's sake and 'his soul's health.'"

"How do you know all this, Temple?"

"You know your friend Kiomi was one of the party. The captain sent her on shore because he had no room for

her. She told us Edbury offered bribes of hundreds and thousands for the captain to let him and Mabel go off in the boat with Kiomi, and then he took to begging to go alone. He tried to rouse the crew. The poor fellow cringed, she says, and afterwards he threatened to swim off. The captain locked him up."

My immediate reflections hit on the Bible lessons Edbury must have had to swallow, and the gaping of the waters when its truths were suddenly and tremendously brought home to him.

An odd series of accidents! I thought.

Temple continued: "Heriot held his tongue about it next morning. He was one of the guests, though he had sworn he wouldn't go. He said something to Janet that betrayed him, for she has not seen him since."

"How betrayed him?" said I.

"Why," said Temple, "of course it was Heriot who put Edbury in Kiomi's hands. Edbury wouldn't have known of Mabel's sailing, or known the vessel she was in, without her help. She led him down to the water and posted him in sight before she went to Captain Welsh's; and when you and Captain Welsh walked away, Edbury rowed to the Priscilla. Old Heriot is not responsible for the consequences. What he supposed was likely enough. He thought that Edbury and Mabel were much of a pair, and thought, I suppose, that if Edbury saw her he'd find he couldn't leave her, and old Lady Kane would stand nodding her plumes for nothing at the altar. And so she did: and a pretty scene it was.

She snatched at the minutes as they slipped past twelve like fishes, and snarled at the parson, and would have kept him standing till one P.M., if Janet had not turned on her heel. The old woman got in front of her to block her way. Janet said 'Well?' Lady Kane muttered a word or two. 'Have you to accuse *me* of anything?' said Janet, and walked by. 'Ah, Temple,' she said to me, 'it would be hard if I could not think I had done all that was due to them.' I didn't see her again till she was starting for Germany. And, Richie, she thinks you can never forgive her. She wrote me word that the princess is of another mind, but her own opinion, she says, is based upon knowing you."

"Good heaven! how little!" cried I.

Temple did me a further wrong by almost thanking me on Janet's behalf for my sustained love for her, while he praised the very qualities of pride and a spirited sense of obligation which had reduced her to dread my unforgivingness. Yet he and Janet had known me longest. Supposing that my idea of myself differed from theirs for the simple reason that I thought of what I had grown to be, and they of what I had been through the previous years? Did I judge by the flower, and they by root and stem? But the flower is a thing of the season; the flower drops off: it may be a different development next year. Did they not therefore judge me soundly?

Ottilia was the keenest reader. Ottilia had divined what could be wrought out of me. I was still subject to the relapses of a not perfectly ripened nature, as I per-

ceived when glancing back at my thought of 'An odd series of accidents!' which was but a disguised fashion of attributing to providence the particular concern in my fortunes: an impiety and a folly! This is the temptation of those who are rescued and made happy by circumstances. The wretched think themselves spited, and are merely childish, not egregious in egotism. Thither on leads to a chapter—already written by the wise, doubtless. It does not become an atom of humanity to dwell on it beyond a point where students of the human condition may see him passing through the experiences of the flesh and the brain. Meantime, Temple and I, at two hand-basins, soaped and towelled, and I was more discreet towards him than I have been to you, for I reserved from him altogether the pronunciation of the council of senators in the secret chamber of my head. Whether, indeed, I have fairly painted the outer part of myself waxes dubious when I think of his spluttering laugh and shout: "Richie, you haven't changed a bit—you're just like a boy!" Certain indications of external gravity, and a sinking of the natural springs within, characterized Temple's approach to the responsible position of a British husband and father. We talked much of Captain Welsh, and the sedate practical irony of his imprisoning one like Edbury to discipline him on high seas, as well as the singular situation of the couple of culprits under his admonishing regimen, and the tragic end. My next two minutes alone with Janet was tempered by it. Only my eagerness for another term of

privacy persuaded her that I was her lover instead of judge, and then, having made the discovery that a single-minded gladness animated me in the hope that she and I would travel together one in body and soul, she surrendered, with her last bit of pride broken; except, it may be, a fragment of reserve traceable in the confession that came quaintly after supreme self-blame, when she said she was bound to tell me that possibly—probably, were the trial to come over again, she should again act as she had done. Happily for us both, my wits had been sharpened enough to know that there is more in men and women than the stuff they utter. And blessed privilege now! if the lips were guilty of nonsense, I might stop them. Besides, I was soon to be master upon such questions. She admitted it, admitting, with an unwonted emotional shiver, that absolute freedom could be the worst of perils. "For women?" said I. She preferred to say, "For girls;" and then, "Yes, for women, as they are educated at present." Spice of the princess's conversation flavoured her speech. The signs unfamiliar about her for me were marks of the fire she had come out of; the struggle, the torture, the determined sacrifice, through pride's conception of duty. She was iron once. She had come out of the fire finest steel.

"Riversley! Harry," she murmured, and my smile, and word, and squeeze in reply, brought back a whole gleam of the fresh English morning she had been in face, and voice, and person.

Was it conceivable that we could go back to Riversley single?

Before that was answered she had to make a statement; and in doing it she blushed, because it involved Edbury's name, and seemed to involve her attachment to him; but she paid me the compliment of speaking it frankly. It was that she had felt herself bound in honour to pay Edbury's debts. Even by such slight means as her saying, "Riversley, Harry," and my kiss of her fingers when a question of money was in debate, did we burst aside the vestiges of mutual strangeness, and recognise one another, but with an added warmth of love. When I pleaded for the marriage to be soon, she said, "I wish it, Harry."

Sentiment you do not obtain from a Damascus blade. She most cordially despised the ladies who parade and play on their sex, and are for ever acting according to the feminine standard:—a dangerous stretch of contempt for one less strong than she.

Riding behind her and Temple one day with the princess, I said, "What takes you most in Janet?"

She replied, "Her courage. And it is of a kind that may knot up every other virtue worth having. I have impulses, and am capable of desperation, but I have no true courage: so I envy and admire, even if I have to blame her; for I know that this possession of hers, which identifies her and marks her from the rest of us, would bear the ordeal of fire. I can imagine the qualities I have most pride in withering and decay-

ing under a prolonged trial. I cannot conceive her courage failing. Perhaps because I have it not myself I think it the rarest of precious gifts. It seems to me to imply one half, and to dispense with the other."

I have lived to think that Ottilia was right. As nearly right, too, in the wording of her opinion as one may be in three or four sentences designed to be comprehensive.

My Janet's readiness to meet calamity was shown ere we reached home upon an evening of the late autumn, and set eye on a scene, for her the very saddest that could have been devised to test her spirit of endurance, when, driving up the higher heath-land, we saw the dark sky ominously reddened over Riversley, and, mounting the ridge, had the funeral flames of the old Grange dashed in our faces. The blow was evil, sudden, unaccountable. Villagers, tenants, farm-labourers, groups of a deputation that had gone to the railway-station to give us welcome, and returned, owing to a delay in our arrival, stood gazing from all quarters. The Grange was burning in two great wings, that soared in flame-tips and columns of crimson smoke, leaving the central hall and chambers untouched as yet, but alive inside with mysterious ranges of lights, now curtained, now made bare—a feeble contrast to the savage blaze to right and left, save for the wonder aroused as to its significance. These were soon cloaked. Dead sable reigned in them, and at once a jet of flame gave the whole vast building to destruction. My wife thrust her hand in mine. Fire at the heart, fire at the wings—our

old home stood in that majesty of horror which freezes the limbs of men, bidding them look and no more. "What has Riversley done to deserve this?" I heard Janet murmur to herself. "His room!" she said, when at the south-east wing, where my old grandfather had slept, there burst a glut of flame. We drove down to the park and along the carriage-road to the first red line of gazers. They told us that no living creatures were in the house. My aunt Dorothy was at Bulsted. I perceived my father's man, Tollingby, among the servants, and called him to me; others came, and out of a clatter of tongues, and all eyes fearfully askant at the wall of fire, we gathered that a great reception had been prepared for us by my father: lamps, lights in all the rooms, torches in the hall, illuminations along the windows, stores of fireworks, such a display as only he could have dreamed of. The fire had broken out at dusk, from an explosion of fireworks at one wing and some inexplicable mismanagement at the other. But the house must have been like a mine, what with the powder, the torches, the devices in paper and muslin, and the extraordinary decorations fitted up to celebrate our return in harmony with my father's fancy. Gentlemen on horseback dashed up to us. Captain Bulsted seized my hand. He was hot from a ride to fetch engines, and sung sharp in my ear, "Have you got him?" It was my father he meant. The cry rose for my father, and the groups were agitated and split, and the name of the missing man, without an

answer to it, shouted. Captain Bulsted had left him bravely attempting to quench the flames after the explosion of fireworks. He rode about, interrogating the frightened servants and grooms holding horses and dogs. They could tell us that the cattle were safe, not a word of my father; and amid shrieks of women at fresh falls of timber and ceiling into the pit of fire, and warnings from the men, we ran the heated circle of the building to find a loophole and offer aid if a living soul should be left; the night around us bright as day, busier than day, and a human now added to elemental horror. Janet would not quit her place. She sent her carriage-horses to Bulsted, and sat in the carriage to see the last of burning Riversley. Each time that I came to her she folded her arms on my neck and kissed me silently. She wept more when little Kiomi was found after a winter night stretched over the grave of her child, frozen dead; more when news came to us that our friend Heriot had fallen on an Indian battle-field.

We gathered from the subsequent testimony of men and women of the household who had collected their wits, that my father must have remained in the doomed old house to look to the safety of my aunt Dorothy. He was never seen again.

THE END.

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